Islam and Nation

SEPARATIST REBELLION *in* ACEH, INDONESIA

EDWARD ASPINALL

STUDIES IN ASIAN SECURITY

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Islam and Nation

SERIES EDITORS

Muthiah Alagappa
East-West Center

Amitav Acharya
American University

Alastair Iain Johnston
Harvard University

David Leheny
Princeton University

T. V. Paul
McGill University

Randall Schweller
The Ohio State University

INTERNATIONAL BOARD

Rajesh M. Basrur
Nanyang Technological University

Brian L. Job
University of British Columbia

Barry Buzan
London School of Economics

Miles Kahler
University of California, San Diego

Victor D. Cha
Georgetown University

Peter J. Katzenstein
Cornell University

Thomas J. Christensen
Princeton University

Khong Yuen Foong
University of Oxford

Stephen P. Cohen
The Brookings Institution

Byung-Kook Kim
Korea University

Chu Yun-han
Academia Sinica

Michael Mastanduno
Dartmouth College

Rosemary Foot
University of Oxford

Mike Mochizuki
The George Washington University

Aaron L. Friedberg
Princeton University

Katherine H. S. Moon
Wellesley College

Sumit Ganguly
Indiana University, Bloomington

Qin Yaqing
China Foreign Affairs University

Avery Goldstein
University of Pennsylvania

Christian Reus-Smit
Australian National University

Michael J. Green
Georgetown University; Center for Strategic and International Studies

Varun Sahni
Jawaharlal Nehru University

Etel Solingen
University of California, Irvine

Stephan M. Haggard
University of California, San Diego

Rizal Sukma
CSIS, Jakarta

G. John Ikenberry
Princeton University

Wu Xinbo
Fudan University

Takashi Inoguchi
Chuo University

Studies in Asian Security

A SERIES SPONSORED BY THE EAST-WEST CENTER

Muthiah Alagappa, Chief Editor
Distinguished Senior Fellow, East-West Center

The ***Studies in Asian Security*** book series promotes analysis, understanding, and explanation of the dynamics of domestic, transnational, and international security challenges in Asia. The peer-reviewed publications in the Series analyze contemporary security issues and problems to clarify debates in the scholarly community, provide new insights and perspectives, and identify new research and policy directions. Security is defined broadly to include the traditional political and military dimensions as well as nontraditional dimensions that affect the survival and well-being of political communities. Asia, too, is defined broadly to include Northeast, Southeast, South, and Central Asia.

Designed to encourage original and rigorous scholarship, books in the *Studies in Asian Security* series seek to engage scholars, educators, and practitioners. Wide-ranging in scope and method, the Series is receptive to all paradigms, programs, and traditions, and to an extensive array of methodologies now employed in the social sciences.

⋆ ⋆ ⋆

The East-West Center is an education and research organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. Funding for the Center comes from the U.S. government, with additional support provided by private agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations, and the governments of the region.

Islam and Nation

SEPARATIST REBELLION IN ACEH, INDONESIA

Edward Aspinall

Stanford University Press • Stanford, California

Stanford University Press
Stanford, California

©2009 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system without the prior written permission of Stanford University Press.

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free, archival-quality paper

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Aspinall, Edward.
Islam and nation : separatist rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia / Edward Aspinall.
p. cm. -- (Studies in Asian security)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8047-6044-7 (cloth : alk. paper)--ISBN 978-0-8047-6045-4 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Gerakan Aceh Merdeka--History. 2. Nationalism--Indonesia--Aceh--History. 3. Nationalism--Religious aspects--Islam. 4. Islam and politics--Indonesia--Aceh. 5. Aceh (Indonesia)--History--Autonomy and independence movements. 6. Aceh (Indonesia)--Politics and government. I. Title. II. Series: Studies in Asian security.
DS646.15.A8A85 2009
959.804--dc22 2009007191

Typeset by Bruce Lundquist in 13.5/15.5 Bembo

Special discounts for bulk quantities of Stanford Security Series are available to corporations, professional associations, and other organizations. For details and discount information, contact the special sales department of Stanford University Press. Tel: (650) 736-1783, Fax: (650) 736-1784

Contents

	Preface and Acknowledgments	ix
	Glossary	xv
1	Nation, Islam, War, and Peace	1
2	Aceh, Islam, and Indonesia	18
3	Birth of Nationalism	49
4	Rural and Global Networks	84
5	The Nationalist Moment	121
6	Violence, Money, Insurgency	151
7	Islam to Nationalism	193
8	From War to Peace	220
9	Conclusion	248
	Notes	255
	Bibliography	265
	Index	277

Preface and Acknowledgments

This book originated during a visit I made to Aceh, Indonesia, as part of a group of election monitors in June 1999. This was my first trip to Aceh, and it was a very affecting one. Indonesia's first democratic elections in more than forty years were being celebrated around the country as a victory of the anti-authoritarian impulse that had led to the collapse of the Soeharto government a year earlier. Yet in Aceh there was an atmosphere of fear, very low voter participation, and a rising tide of violence.

As I made return visits over succeeding years, and as my plans for this book developed, my aim was to write a study that explained why the political dynamics in Aceh were so different from the dynamics in other parts of Indonesia. This effort involved me in trying to understand the historical, ideological, and social roots of the separatist insurgency, an endeavor that eventually led me to engage with wider theories and debates about nationalism, about its relations with religion, and about civil war.

From the start, however, another aim was to try to tell the story of the Aceh conflict from the perspective of the participants. Some excellent studies of the conflict already existed, but their authors had been hampered by the difficulty of gaining access to Aceh during the Soeharto years. Most of these studies stressed the broad structural context of violence rather than the experiences and views of the conflict actors themselves.

This book therefore draws not only on Indonesian and foreign press reports and archival material, but also on several hundred interviews with Free

Aceh Movement leaders and fighters, nongovernmental organization and student activists, religious leaders, politicians, academics, military officers, and others. I was very privileged to meet with such a wide range of people and to have so many of them generously share their time, experiences, and views with me. Often they did so not once but several times over a period of years. This book would not have been possible without their support, and I am very grateful for it.

It was not always easy to conduct this research. One problem was that I did not consistently have access to Aceh. After a period of relative openness after the 1998 fall of Soeharto, renewed conflict made visits increasingly difficult. Eventually, after the declaration of a "military emergency" in May 2003, severe restrictions were placed on visits by even foreign journalists and humanitarian workers, let alone researchers. For a time it was no longer possible for me to visit. The situation changed after the terrible Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004, when thousands of humanitarian workers flooded into Aceh. At the urging of some of my Acehnese friends, I traveled once more to Banda Aceh, the capital of the province, and spent several weeks there playing a very minor role in the relief effort. Officials in the Indonesian embassy in Canberra, Australia, however, apparently took exception to my participation in a public seminar about Aceh in Sydney around that time, which led to my being banned from visiting Indonesia. The ban seemed to end my hopes of conducting further field research for this book, but the successful conclusion of the peace process in August 2005 meant that a year later the ban was revoked and I could once again enter the country.

Even when it was possible to visit, it was generally difficult to conduct research in Aceh. The poor security situation often meant it was difficult to travel, and conducting interviews could be risky, both for myself and for informants. During the conflict years I did not stay long in villages where guerillas were operating or risk visiting their camps. On some visits I did not venture far from Banda Aceh. I was able to make up partly for this deficiency by meeting rebel leaders and supporters in exile on several trips to Sweden, Malaysia, the United States, and elsewhere, and by travelling more freely in Aceh after August 2006, when I had the privilege of meeting many former combatants and commanders.

Another problem was dealing with the differing expectations that people in Aceh had of me. Although many government officials suspected that foreigners visiting Aceh had the single purpose of speeding its exit from Indonesia, a less threatening but equally uncomfortable situation sometimes arose when Acehnese nationalists made the same assumption and tried to enlist me

as an adviser to their struggle. People on both sides of the Aceh conflict will find things in this book that displease them or with which they disagree. I hope only that I kept the promises I made to try to do justice to the views and experiences of my informants and to convey them honestly.

In this regard, it is worth making one further note about method. In Aceh, as in many countries engaged in civil war, it was often difficult to get an accurate account of events. Conflict actors often had interests in denying responsibility for violence they had committed, in keeping their activities secret, and in confusing their adversaries and the public with misinformation. Some victims of violence found the identities and motives of their attackers to be terrifyingly unclear. Some people tried to take credit for activities in which they were not involved, or claimed to have privileged information about little-known secrets. In this environment, fearful and sometimes fantastic rumors and theories flourished: about who was responsible for violence, about the hidden intentions behind it, about internal conflicts and plots among the guerillas, and about "black" operations by state intelligence agents and their proxies. Media sources were useful for many purposes, but journalists too operated with limited information and often feared reprisals for their reporting. Although I read many thousands of newspaper reports, I tended to be careful in relying on them to reconstruct events, especially during particularly repressive periods. Wherever possible I tried to be methodologically conservative, emphasizing interviews with individuals who had directly participated in the events I discuss in the book, and relying mostly on them to build my analysis. I tried to check such material with other informants or sources wherever I could, and where doubts remain I have tried to indicate these in the text. The end result is that I have also excluded from my analysis masses of sensational but unverified material. Even so, because the subject matter of the book *is* largely concerned with conspiracy and secrets, it is quite possible that it still contains important omissions and errors. This book is a first draft of the history of Aceh's separatist conflict. If tensions in Aceh continue to decline as time passes, it is hoped that fuller and more detailed histories will be written.

This book was also written in conjunction with an East-West Center project on the dynamics and management of internal conflict in Asia that ran for several years and involved a wide variety of persons with expertise on many of the region's most bitter conflicts. I am very grateful to the Center's Muthiah Alagappa for inviting me to participate in this inspirational project, and for his support over the following years, and to the many project participants for their ideas and input. Initial funding for the research was provided by grants from the East-West Center, the University of New South Wales, the Australian

National University, and the University of Sydney. Colleagues at the University of Sydney were very generous in allowing me to take leave from teaching soon after I began to work there. Most of the research funding was provided by a Discovery Grant from the Australian Research Council, without which many of the field trips and interviews and much of the archival work would not have been possible. The KITLV Institute in Leiden, The Netherlands, provided a one-month fellowship to allow me to finalize the manuscript. Two reviewers for Stanford University Press as well as Gerry van Klinken, Benedict Kerkvliet, Antje Missbach, and Sidney Jones read the whole manuscript and provided many useful comments.

Several students I supervised—Madeleine Foley, Michelle Miller, Paul Zeccola, Antje Missbach, Iskandar Zulkarnaen, and Muhammad Rizwan—wrote theses or studies on Aceh. I am grateful for the ideas and stimulation that working with them provided. At different points research assistance was provided by Sarah Macdonald, Tim Adair, Sally White, Elisabeth Jackson, Thuy Thu Pham, Allison Ley, and Iwan Dzulvan Amir, and I am very grateful for their help. The Hoover Institution generously allowed me to access its archives. I am also very grateful to Geoffrey Burn and Mariana Raykov at Stanford University Press, and to Alice Rowan for her careful copyediting. Scattered throughout this book are paragraphs derived from articles I published previously, including "The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict" (*Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2007, 51(6): 950–972), "From Islamism to Nationalism in Aceh, Indonesia" (*Nations and Nationalism*, 2007, 13(2): 245–263), "Sovereignty, the Successor State and Universal Human Rights: History and the International Structuring of Acehnese Nationalism" (*Indonesia*, 2002, 73: 1–24), and "Modernity, History, and Ethnicity: Indonesian and Acehnese Nationalism in Conflict" (*Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, 2002, 36(1): 3–33). I thank the publishers for permission to reuse this material.

Many Acehnese assisted by sharing their experiences, providing documents, and helping me to contact others. They are too numerous to mention all of them by name. In Malaysia, Nur Djuli and Taufik were very helpful; in Sweden, Malik Mahmud, Bakhtiar Abdullah, and Zaini Abdullah, as well as Dr. Husaini Hasan and Yusuf Daud, were all exceptionally generous with their time. In Aceh and elsewhere Otto Syamsuddin Ishak, Nezar Patria, Hendra Budian, and Aguswandi, who have become good friends, were always stimulating discussion partners; the last two also allowed me to stay in their homes. Abu Karim hosted me in Bireuen; Iskandar Zulkarnaen and Muhammad Rizwan were generous and informative hosts in Lhokseumawe. Saleh

Amin showed me around South Aceh. Arie Maulana not only helped me enormously during repeated visits to Aceh, he also put me up at his house, hosted many invigorating late-night conversations, and has become a very close friend.

One young man whose help I especially remember is Zulfikar. A twenty-four-year-old student at the State Institute for Islamic Studies, he accompanied me around Banda Aceh in 2002 and searched for articles in the office of the local newspaper. He was a quiet and thoughtful young man. Several months later I learned that he and a colleague, Mukhlis, had been abducted while accompanying village people displaced by the conflict who were holding a protest in Bireuen. Zulfikar's friends recognized the abductors as members of the local military intelligence (Satuan Gabungan Intel, or SGI) post and even took a photograph of the vehicle that took him and Mukhlis away. The authorities have always denied they took either man. Zulfikar's whereabouts have never been determined and his friends assume he was killed. This book is dedicated to his memory. He is one of many people whose lives were ended prematurely by the Aceh conflict.

A Note on Spelling

The territory referred to in this book as *Aceh* has and continues to be spelled in various ways in the Latin alphabet. Until the mid-twentieth century, variations such as *Achin*, *Acheen*, and *Acheh* were often used in English. Then, following Dutch spelling convention, *Atjeh* became the standard in Indonesian. After the introduction of the "perfected spelling" system in 1972, *Atjeh* was changed to *Aceh*. Many Acehnese nationalists reject this spelling, however, preferring *Atjeh* or *Acheh*. In this book I keep to the standard modern Indonesian spelling, except in quotations.

Glossary

Aceh Merdeka	Free Aceh; most commonly used name for GAM before the 1990s
adat	customs and traditions
AGAM	*Angkatan Gerakan Atjeh Merdeka*, Free Aceh Movement Armed Forces; used for GAM fighting forces before 2002
ASNLF	Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front; early and formal version of GAM's name
bangsa	nation
BEM	*Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa*, Student Executive Body
bupati	head of a district
camat	subdistrict head
cuak	spy, informant, or traitor
Darul Islam	Abode of Islam
dayah	traditional Islamic boarding school
DOM	*Daerah Operasi Militer*, Military Operations Zone; often used as shorthand to describe the repressive 1990–1998 period in Aceh
DPRD	*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*, Regional People's Representative Council

GAM	*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, Free Aceh Movement
Golkar	*Golongan Karya*, Functional Groups; government party in the Soeharto era
HDC	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue; formerly the Henry Dunant Centre
hikayat	epic verses
hikayat prang sabi	epic of the holy war
HUDA	*Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh*, Aceh Association of Dayah Ulama
ilmu	esoteric or magical knowledge
imeum teuntara	prayer leader and religious advisor for GAM fighters
jilbab	head scarf or covering for women
kadi	religious judge or official
kafir	unbeliever
keuchik	village head
Kopassus	*Komando Pasukan Khusus*, Special Force Command; army special troops
madrasah	Islamic school, usually one with a modern orientation
Masyumi	Islamic party of the 1940s and 1950s
nanggroe	land, country
pajak nanggroe	state taxes; payments levied by GAM
PAN	*Partai Amanat Nasional*, National Mandate Party
Pancasila	The Five Principles; Indonesian national philosophy first propounded by Sukarno
panglima muda	commander of a *daerah*, the middle territorial unit in GAM military structure
panglima wilayah	commander of one of the seventeen *wilayah*, the highest of GAM's territorial divisions
panglima sagoe	commander of the lowest territorial unit in GAM military structure
PUSA	*Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh*, All-Aceh Association of Ulama

PPP	*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, United Development Party
preman	gangster or thug
santri	students from religious boarding schools
shari'a	Islamic law
sagoe	lowest level in GAM territorial structure, encompassing at least several villages
SIRA	*Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh*, Aceh Referendum Information Center
suku	a component part, an ethnic group
suku bangsa	ethnic group
Teuku, *Tk*	honorific for a male *uleebalang*
Teungku, *Tengku*, *Tgk*	honorific formerly only for men learned in religion, now for all men
thaliban	student at a religious school
TNA	*Teuntara Neugara Atjeh*, Armed Forces of the State of Aceh; name use for GAM fighting forces after 2002
TNI	*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, Indonesian National Military
ukhuwah Islamiyah	Islamic brotherhood
ulama	religious scholar
uleebalang	a hereditary territorial ruler in Aceh in the precolonial and colonial periods
umma	the Islamic community
USU	*Universitas Sumatra Utara*, North Sumatra University
wali nanggroe	guardian or head of state

Map of Aceh, Indonesia

Note: District boundaries are shown as of 2002–2007. Between 1998 and 2002, many new districts were formed out of old ones in Aceh, as happened elsewhere in Indonesia at this time. For the Soeharto period, Aceh Jaya, Aceh Barat, and Nagan Raya formed a single district, West Aceh; Bireuen was part of Aceh Utara; Aceh Barat Daya, Aceh Selatan and Aceh Singkil formed the district of South Aceh; Aceh Tamiang was part of East Aceh; Gayo Lues was part of Southeast Aceh. Adapted by permission of the East-West Center.

Islam and Nation

1

Nation, Islam, War, and Peace

> "Who is the governor of Aceh?" asked Military Resort Commander A.Y. Nasution, during a discussion with a group of children. . . . "Abdullah Syafi'ie, Sir," piped up Mustafa, a grade five elementary school student. The commander was shocked and surprised, then quiet for a moment. Then he explained to the children that the governor of Aceh was Abdullah Puteh. "That Abdullah Syafi'ie, he's a GAM rebel" he explained, prompting laughter from the villagers.
>
> Analisa, *April 27, 2004*

This uncomfortable scene, in which a child in a village in North Aceh confuses the name of the head of Indonesia's provincial government with the name of the (deceased) military leader of Aceh's rebel movement, occurred almost a year after the Indonesian government declared martial law in Aceh. The government had intended to exterminate the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, or GAM) "down to its roots," but military officers' encounters with Acehnese school children suggested that this was easier said than done; the incident just presented was not the only one of its type recorded in the press. A few months earlier another officer found that students at a different school in North Aceh did not know the date of Indonesian army day, yet could quickly recall the anniversary of GAM's declaration of independence. "Education has failed," he lamented, apparently good-humoredly (*Kompas*, October 28, 2003). A little later, Colonel Nasution was angry when a patriotic song competition was attended by students from only thirty-five of the ninety schools invited. Schools that did not send students, he said, had likely been

"influenced by GAM." The army would interrogate their principals. "Fighting the GAM rebels doesn't have to be with weapons. This kind of event will also make GAM sad. School children are blank sheets. It's up to us what we fill their heads with" (*Waspada*, June 2, 2004).

Such reactions are not surprising. In Indonesia, as elsewhere, the education system had been a chief instrument of nation building. At schools throughout the country, all children were taught a uniform curriculum in the same national language about the same national history and culture. Students learned that *kebhinekaan* (diversity) was Indonesia's essence, and about the many ethnic groups that made up the Indonesian nation. In this way, the state tried to inculcate national identity in its future citizens. Yet in Aceh, after the Soeharto regime collapsed, the education system began to falter in performing this function. Its failure was testimony to the success of GAM's insurgency, the leaders of which had always viewed the education system as one of their greatest enemies precisely because of its role in turning children into Indonesian citizens.

These events came as part of the penultimate act in a bitter secessionist dispute that ran on and off in Aceh between 1976 and 2005. That dispute is the subject of this book. It is safe to say that the conflict caused great suffering, although data on the victims are still being collected and we do not yet have precise figures. The death toll over thirty years of conflict is uncertain and controversial, but it is likely to be in the vicinity of twelve to twenty thousand people.[1] This figure is equivalent to approximately 0.5 percent of the 2007 population of 4,350,000. After the conflict ended, a survey conducted by Harvard Medical School and the International Organization for Migration (2007) in seventeen districts of Aceh found very high levels of conflict-related abuses of civilians. For example, 38 percent of respondents reported that a family member or friend was killed, 24 percent experienced forced labor, and 40 percent experienced the confiscation or destruction of property.

The conflict began with the formation of GAM in 1976 (or early in 1977; the exact date is disputed) and is conventionally divided into three periods: (1) 1976 to about 1979, during which GAM had only about two hundred members and was quickly repressed; (2) 1989 to 1998, when the movement resurrected itself and launched new attacks, prompting massive retribution; and (3) 1998 to 2005, when, after the authoritarian Soeharto regime collapsed, it resurged and temporarily controlled much of Aceh's countryside. For a time, Indonesian sovereignty looked shaky. A resurgent hard-line mood in Jakarta and a return to harsh methods in Aceh ended this brief nationalist euphoria. The military offensive, however, proved to be the prelude to a peace deal that ended the armed conflict altogether, at least for a time. Under the Helsinki Memorandum of Understand-

ing of August 2005, GAM members put aside their goal of independence, gave up their arms, and ran in elections. Surprising most observers, the peace has held since that time.

During the conflict years, the two sides strove to "fill the heads" of the Acehnese with different visions of their place in the world and in history. For the Acehnese nationalists of GAM, Aceh was distinct from and incompatible with Indonesia. Hasan di Tiro,[2] founder of the movement, explained in his declaration of independence in 1976 that Indonesia was merely a front for Javanese dominance and that "the Javanese are alien and foreign people to us Achehnese Sumatrans. We have no historic, political, cultural, economic or geographic relationship with them." He also explained that the Acehnese "had always been a free and independent Sovereign State since the world begun [sic]." Aceh's movement for national liberation was, in this view, merely reclaiming the sovereignty of the old Acehnese sultanate, which had succumbed to Dutch colonialism after heroic resistance in the nineteenth century. However, when, "after World War II, the Dutch East Indies was supposed to have been liquidated—an empire is not liquidated if its territorial integrity was preserved—our fatherland, Acheh, Sumatra, was not returned to us. Instead, our fatherland was turned over by the Dutch to the Javanese—their mercenaries—by hasty fiat of former colonial powers" (di Tiro 1984a, 25). This vision of Aceh's historical authenticity and its incompatibility with Indonesia was central to Acehnese nationalism to the end.

The Indonesian government's view (shared by many Acehnese) was that the Acehnese, although members of a distinct ethnic group, were merely constituents of Indonesia's multicultural nation. Indeed, they were a treasured and honored group, having played a key part in winning Indonesian independence from the Dutch in the 1940s. As one military officer explained, "The ancestors of the Acehnese long ago swore oaths to Indonesian independence. Why now rebel? Betrayal: that's what you call it" (*Serambi Indonesia*, September 2, 2003). Surya Paloh, a prominent Acehnese businessman and national politician, used less bellicose language to make the same point: "For the people of Aceh, once free means always free" (*Serambi Indonesia*, August 18, 2003). For Surya Paloh, the only independence that counted was the independence of Aceh from Dutch rule as part of Indonesia in 1945, not the new version promised by GAM.

Although the two sides in the conflict fought with guns, fire, and bombs, their battle was fundamentally about the identity of the people at the center of the conflict, the Acehnese themselves. This battle over identity poses major problems for the researcher because almost every element of identity is contested. The history of Aceh, for example, presents raw material that could

be used to support both sides. Aceh did have a long history of independent statehood and of resistance to colonial powers. Moreover, almost as soon as Indonesia became independent in 1949, many Acehnese revolted against the central government. On the basis of this history, Acehnese nationalists propagated an image of the Acehnese as permanently rebellious and independence-minded. There was also much to be said for the historical arguments advanced by antiseparatists: during Indonesia's national revolution against the Dutch in the 1940s no voices were raised in favor of a separate Acehnese state; even individuals who later supported independence backed the Indonesian cause. In the more recent, post-1998 period, in the space of a few years Aceh saw *both* one of the largest secessionist mobilizations of modern times *and* the sudden abandonment of secessionist goals by virtually the entire spectrum of Acehnese opinion. Rebel leaders who had been ardent nationalists suddenly accepted that Aceh would remain part of Indonesia, prompting some observers to say that Acehnese nationalism had always lacked depth.

Equally, even what was meant by the term *Acehnese* was contested. At the very least, it could mean *residents* of the territory of Aceh, or it could refer to individuals who identified, or were identified, as *ethnically* Acehnese. Questions about ethnic identification were not asked in Indonesian censuses until after the fall of Soeharto; violence prevented meaningful data collection for the 2000 census, but the intercensal (*susenas*) survey of 2003 suggested that 82.7 percent of the population of Aceh considered themselves—when asked—to be ethnically Acehnese. (Two decades earlier, the 1980 census had indicated that 67.5 percent of the population spoke Acehnese at home, and that figure had declined to 57.4 percent by the 1995 intercensal survey.) In addition to Acehnese speakers, several other ethnic groups were also indigenous to the territory; these groups included relatively large populations such as the Gayo and Alas in the central highlands, as well as many migrants and their descendants. In its early iterations, Acehnese nationalism elided the distinction between territorial and ethnic identity, stressing simply that the Acehnese were a noble and ancient people who deserved to regain their historic statehood. When pressed, Acehnese nationalists said that all groups indigenous to the territory were constituent ethnicities in an overarching Acehnese nation (a formulation that almost exactly replicated how Indonesian nationalists viewed the relationship between Aceh and Indonesia). However, they also mobilized many distinctly *ethnic* symbolic resources (such as the Acehnese language). Although some individuals among the Gayo and other minorities did identify with Acehnese nationalism and became members or supporters of GAM, others viewed the movement as representing only narrowly chauvinistic eth-

nic Acehnese interests. Overall, Acehnese nationalism had greater difficulties striking roots in these communities than in Acehnese-speaking heartland areas such as Pidie on the east coast. Of course census results and talk of ethnic "majorities" and "minorities" say very little about all of the people of mixed heritage, about those who could switch between languages and cultural codes in ethnically heterogeneous contexts, or about those who were simply unaware of or indifferent to matters of ethnic identity in most daily situations. The point is that although Acehnese nationalists insisted that people had to choose between only two alternative identities—Acehnese and Indonesian—at the level of lived experience the available choices of ethnic identification were far more complex—a fact that must always be borne in mind when reading the narrative presented in this book.

Of course such analytical challenges are not unique to the study of Aceh but are typical of ethnic and nationalist conflicts in many contexts. As Rogers Brubaker (1996, 278) reminds us, "Nationhood is not an unambiguous social fact, it is a contestable—and often contested—political claim." Elsewhere he has warned against treating ethnicities as "substantial entities," instead stressing the performative character of ethnic claims, in which actors, "by *invoking* groups . . . seek to *evoke* them, summon them, call them into being" (Brubaker 2002, 164, 166, emphasis in original). The question of identity is cast in a particularly stark light in secessionist struggles in which the fundamental question is not merely about which identity is to be primary but about whether the group at the center of the conflict constitutes a nation and should therefore have a right to a *state*, and sovereignty, of its own.[3] Secessionism is always an attempt by individuals imagining their community to be a putative nation that should excise itself from a larger nation-state, slough off the distinctive features it had worn as part of that larger body, and assert its uniqueness and right to exist as an independent entity. Secessionist nationalism, in other words, grows in an intimate embrace with its mortal foe.

In this book, my intention is not to evaluate the validity of the perspectives of either side of this deadly struggle. I do not seek to debunk the historical or other claims of Acehnese or Indonesian nationalists, nor is my goal to pronounce on the ethics of their claims or decide whether Acehnese can be, or should have been, considered a distinct nation. Rather, I take my lead from Rogers Brubaker (1996, 7):

> Nationalism can and should be understood without invoking "nations" as substantial entities. Instead of focusing on nations as real groups, we should focus on nationhood and nationness, on "nation" as practical category, institutionalized form, and contingent event. "Nation" is a category of practice, not (in the first instance) a category of

> analysis. To understand nationalism, we have to understand the practical uses of the category "nation," the ways it can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action.

It is in this spirit that this book proceeds: as an attempt to understand how the idea of an Acehnese nation came into being, interacted with alternative frames for structuring political action, changed over time, and eventually was transformed.

Theorizing Acehnese Nationalism

This book presents an analysis of the emergence, development, and demise of Acehnese nationalism between 1976 and 2005. It treats nationalism both as a set of ideas and as organization, movement, and insurgency. It grounds the analysis in theoretical debates about nationalism, conflict, and conflict resolution. As explained in the next section, it does this by presenting chapter-length studies that analyze discrete periods from distinct theoretical angles. These chapters crosscut and interlink, but they are not building blocks in a single, overarching hypothesis or line of argument. Nevertheless, the book is animated by three central lines of inquiry and built around three core arguments concerned with the origins of Acehnese nationalism, its relations with Islam, and the dynamics underpinning its eventual demise.

Origins of Acehnese Nationalism

The first question is the most straightforward, but answering it occupies most of the book: What accounts for the emergence of Acehnese nationalism as a mass force? The starting point here will be familiar to students of nationalism everywhere: How deep were the historic roots of the Acehnese nationhood that GAM sought to mobilize? For more than two decades one of the chief debates animating scholarly literature on nationalism has been the question of whether nations arise from processes associated with modernization or are manifestations of resilient ethnic communities rooted in the premodern past. The pendulum in this debate, often glossed as one between "primordialists" and "modernists" (Smith 1998), has swung toward modernism, which might now be considered the new academic orthodoxy.

This book emphasizes the novelty of Acehnese nationalism, in contrast with some analyses of Acehnese rebellion that stress continuity (for example, Reid 2004, Nessen 2006). In comparing the nationalist movement that emerged in the mid-1970s with earlier episodes of mobilization, the book finds striking discontinuity and innovation. Rather than laboring this point and presenting yet another study of the modernity of nationalism and the

constructedness of nationhood in an already crowded field, the focus quickly turns to questions about causation: Why did nationalism arise when and in the form that it did? After all, in many other provinces of Indonesia no secessionist movements arose. What made Aceh special? Moreover, resistance to the state in Aceh could have taken other forms, such as mobilization in favor of an Islamic state (which had happened before) or in support of democratic transformation of Indonesia, rather than separation from it (which happened briefly in 1998). Nationalism is a highly specific kind of political imagination. Why did resistance take this form in Aceh?

Finding unconvincing the nationalist explanation that the Acehnese had simply always been a nation straining for rebirth, the book focuses instead on two sets of factors that may be summed up as *agency* and *context*.

The first point simply suggests that we need to emphasize the purposeful role of political actors in the genesis of nationalism rather than see nationalism as rising automatically from either social processes or premodern ethnic communities. Much of the book tries to understand the actors who created Acehnese nationalism, the social environments and events that molded them, and how they defined their nation and its struggle. Early in the book, the focus is on Hasan di Tiro and his views; later it is on new generations of nationalists who challenged aspects of his vision, as well as on actors from Aceh's Indonesian political establishment who tried a middle course between secession and integration. The different backgrounds and interests of these actors gave them different perspectives on Aceh and its place in the world.

The book's analysis also stresses the context in which these actors operated, which constrained the range of choices available to them and the ways in which they thought about identity. The analysis stresses three aspects of context—the institutional, the international, and the social—that are central to the emergence of nationalism in most contexts.

1. Institutional Context Despite the debates in nationalism studies, most theorists agree that nationalism, as a political movement, is indissolubly linked to the modern state. States are the framework within which nations are constructed, whether deliberately (such that "peasants may become Frenchmen"; Weber 1979) or inadvertently (for instance, when inhabitants of a colonial state imagine those living within its borders as belonging to a single nation). The state is the institution against which minority nationalist movements mobilize, and it is the goal that most nationalist movements aspire to reach.

The history of Acehnese nationalism presented here is above all a story of the interaction between the Acehnese population and the process of state formation. This story begins in the colonial period, but the emphasis is on

attempts by the postcolonial state to integrate Aceh's population into Indonesia by way of various nation-building processes, co-optation of key Acehnese groups into national political structures, discursive representations, and at times coercion. Some of these processes generated grievances that gave secessionism its force. Most analyses of the Aceh conflict emphasize these grievances, especially those concerned with political centralization, natural resource exploitation, and human rights abuses. As important as grievances are to the study of minority nationalist movements, states are also important in terms of the ways in which they may institutionalize and normalize ethnic identity, and thus provide political vocabularies with which to imagine separate nationhood (Brubaker 1996, 1998). States not only injure minority groups and repress separatist movements (the stress in most previous studies of Aceh), they also help constitute them. Acehnese nationalism was fundamentally a child of the Indonesian state.

This book examines this constitutive role of the state in Acehnese nationalism. It does so (following works by earlier scholars, notably Morris 1983 and Bertrand 2004) by emphasizing how a particular set of institutional arrangements were put in place in Aceh to bring an early revolt, the Darul Islam (Abode of Islam), to an end in the 1950s. Essentially a form of regional autonomy, this "special territory" (*daerah istimewa*) status was accompanied by an energetic process of cultural production that did much to normalize and valorize Acehnese identity. At the same time, the Indonesian state became more authoritarian and centralized, meaning that the promise of special treatment was never realized in practice, despite being constantly celebrated. This contradiction laid the ground for the rise of Acehnese nationalism and influenced its form.

The book also argues that Aceh exemplifies a broader phenomenon: that secessionist nationalism is a *reactive* process in which those seeking to construct a secessionist "nation" hold up a mirror to the larger nation-state from which they seek to separate and present themselves as unique on all counts. Nationalist imagery, historical narratives, and ethnic identity are all put to the service of this goal. Thus, the book investigates how Acehnese identity was shaped largely in reaction to official representations of *Indonesian* nationalism. Against the forward-looking and modernizing mission that was central to Indonesian nationalism, first-generation Acehnese nationalists promoted a backward-looking, atavistic vision of an ancient and unchanging Aceh with an inalienable right to sovereignty. In contrast to a multicultural and inclusive Indonesian nation, they painted an exclusionary picture of ethnic authenticity. Later, when a new generation of Acehnese youth had experienced Indonesia above all in terms of military dominance and human rights abuses, Acehnese

nationalists reimagined the quest for independence as an expression of universal human rights and as a response to Indonesia's betrayals of its earlier promises.

2. International Context Studies of national identity formation often concentrate on how nationalist intellectuals look inward to their own societies when creating or popularizing nations; they revive or invent folk traditions, delving into ancient history for myths of origin or narratives of national survival; they seek a national character grounded in the "soul" of the people. All of this occurred in Aceh, but it is also a contention of this book that nations are constructed in equal measure by a nationalist movement's *outward* gaze. This focus is especially so with secessionist nationalists, who look with longing toward the community of nation-states to which they aspire to belong. Studies of secessionist nationalism thus require textured accounts of how the secessionist project, including its image of national identity, is constituted in response to the changing architecture of the international system. This book does this by looking at the effects of the experience of exile on key Acehnese actors, and by investigating how nationalists, even when they were apparently at their most parochial and atavistic, framed their discourse in a language generated by global power structures and directed their claims to international audiences.

Acehnese nationalism was shaped by two distinct moments in the development of the international system. The first moment was the immediate aftermath of World War II, when a world of empires and civilizations gave way to one of nation-states. An increasingly elaborate architecture of international institutions was put in place, centered on the United Nations. New doctrines of international law, such as self-determination, gained salience. This period popularized the notion of a separate and sovereign state as the ultimate prize for every ethnic group worth its salt; as John Kelly and Martha Kaplan (2001, 20) put it, "The Truman doctrine startlingly naturalized the free nation, with its roster of institutions . . . as what any nation would choose if choosing freely." It was against this backdrop that the inchoate regionalist and Islamist outlook of the Darul Islam gave way to the ethnonationalist vision of GAM, with its rigid insistence that the Acehnese were a nation hungering for sovereignty. It was hardly coincidental that Hasan di Tiro, the chief nationalist visionary, was living in exile in New York, near the heartland of this evolving system, and plugged into U.S. Cold War networks that viewed all of Southeast Asia as just one arena in their global struggle against communism. The second moment came in the brief period of liberal optimism after the Cold War ended in the early 1990s, when emphasis on the universality of human rights seemed to challenge the nation-state's

claim to supreme political authority. Many people believed then that the vague outlines of a historically novel global order were becoming apparent. After 1998, a new generation of Acehnese nationalists who were connected to Indonesian and global networks of civil society activism began to reframe Aceh's struggle in terms of human rights and democratization. This move had unforeseen consequences and paved the way for eventual reconciliation with the Indonesian state.

3. Social Context Finally, this book also stresses the social context in which Acehnese nationalism arose, as a corrective against the extreme voluntarism that may characterize instrumentalist or constructivist approaches. To paraphrase Marx, one might say that nationalists do not make nations in circumstances of their own choosing. As Anthony Smith (1998, 130) puts it with regard to attempts to construct nationhood, "To be successful, these attempts need to base themselves on relevant pre-existing social and cultural networks." He argues that "in Central and Eastern Europe, and later in the Middle and Far East, and parts of Africa, native intellectuals and professionals rediscovered and reappropriated a selective ethno-history out of the pre-existing myths, symbols and traditions to be found in the historical record and in the living memories of 'the people,' the mainly rural lower strata" (Smith 1998, 194). This book notes a similar process in Aceh but takes an eclectic view of social context, and it looks at, among other things, kinship networks and ideas about masculinity, as well as at broader socioeconomic structures, investigating how these factors influenced the nationalist movement, its behavior, and its image of nationhood. Unlike Smith's well-known *ethnosymbolist* approach, my view does not see modern Acehnese nationalism as an outgrowth of a premodern *ethnie* and inherited "lines of cultural affinity embodied in myths, memories, symbols and values retained by a given cultural unit of production" (Smith 1991, 192). Rather than being based on ethnic symbols and identity, earlier phases of political mobilization in Aceh were based on Islam. The rise of nationalism marked by the formation of GAM in 1976 was a new kind of politics.

Islam and Nationalism

A second major theme of this book is the relationship between Islam and nationalism. Both Acehnese citizens and scholars conventionally frame Acehnese identity in terms of Islam. This identification is summed up in endlessly repeated phrases like "Aceh is identical with Islam," "Islam and Aceh are two sides of the same coin," and "Islam is the blood and bones of the Acehnese." No Acehnese person I have met—whether orthodox religious scholar, mili-

tary officer, GAM leader, or secularly inclined nongovernmental organization activist—questions this basic identification of Aceh with Islam. Other studies, perhaps not surprisingly, have stressed the role that Islam has played in reinforcing a distinct Acehnese identity and in providing an ideational foundation for resistance to the state (see, for example, Siapno 2002).

The relationship between Islam, Acehnese nationalism, and Indonesian nationalism is complex, however. Aceh provides a rare example of a revolt that was primarily Islamist (Darul Islam) evolving into one that was secessionist and had secular political goals. The Darul Islam rebels not only had Aceh-specific aims but also wanted (in words taken from books authored by leaders of the movement in Aceh) to "Islamize this Indonesian Republic" (Gelanggang 1956, 10) or to "Islamize the state and uphold the dignity of the Muslim people in Indonesia" (Saleh 1956, 83). Yet by the end of the next cycle of rebellion, in the early 2000s, Indonesian officials were denigrating the GAM rebels as anti-Islamic, and the rebels in turn condemned government implementation of aspects of Islamic law (*shari'a*), which had been a central aim of Darul Islam. This startling reversal, embodying a transition from Islamism to secular nationalism, is highly intriguing and requires explanation. It also raises more questions about the relationship between Islam and nationalism.

Some theorists of nationalism hold that Islam is, as Adrian Hastings (1997, 187) puts it, "profoundly anti-national." Comparing Islam to Christianity, Hastings suggests that Islam is "in every way in principle far more politically universalist and exercises in consequence a religious restraint upon nationalism which Christianity has often failed to do. This does not, of course, mean that Muslim societies cannot develop into nations, only that their religion does not help them to do so, directing them instead towards different social and political formations" (Hastings 1997, 201). Hastings and scholars like him echo the views of some Islamist activists who over recent decades have denounced nationalism as a form of particularism in conflict with the universal tenets of the faith. Islam, with its exhortation of the absolute equality of man before God, the indivisibility of the *umma* (the Islamic community), and the universal caliphate as the ideal model of governance is, some Islamists argue, opposed to the tribalism or parochialism of nationalism. According to Moroccan thinker Abd al-Salam Yasin (cited in Sivan 1997, 218–219):

> Both the allegiance to Allah and the allegiance between His believers are diametrically opposed to racial or nationalist (*qawmi*) allegiance. Nationalism is our scourge and our plague, for it sows divisiveness among Muslims, based upon a presumed ethnic affiliation. It further leads to political, internecine fights initiated by the nationalist

> statelets. . . . The Prophet himself has declared solidarities predicated upon blood and ethnicity to be *jahili*, dregs of the past, which must be combated and erased.

In fact, most Muslims have long accommodated themselves to nationalism. James Piscatori (1986, 45) points out that there is a "consensus of speech" in the Muslim world that sees the territorial state as "a natural and even worthy institution." Indeed, it is possible in many places to trace an unbroken historical line between Islamic and nationalist mobilization. In the Middle East there was rapid transition between waves of thinking on the national question, with pan-Islam giving way to pan-Arabism and then to the various territorial nationalisms. More obviously in contravention to Hastings' argument are those majority Muslim areas ruled by Europeans where Islam was a marker of difference between colonizers and colonized and contributed directly to the emergence of nationalism. In the Dutch East Indies, the first truly mass-based political movement opposed to Dutch rule that had "national" reach was the *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Union), which depicted identity and difference as a dichotomy between Muslims and unbelievers but by doing so contributed greatly to the birth of the idea of Indonesia. In a recent work on the contribution of Islam to the rise of Indonesian nationalism, Michael Laffan (2003, 2) argues:

> Muslim reformists, whose activities were focused on the peoples and concerns of the Netherlands Indies, expressed their sense of imagined community above all else as a function of Islam. Through their activities pre-existing ideas of alterity founded in people (European v. Asian) and religion (Christian v. Muslim) were fused and contextualized within newly formed colonial boundaries which of themselves had no inherent validity. Such a fusion, . . . was important for a pan-ethnic nationalism to be developed and propagated among the largely Muslim peoples of the archipelago.

A similar historical process occurred in Aceh. The wars, rebellions, and political mobilizations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were largely conceived in Islamic terms. During the decades of colonial control (from about 1903 to 1942), however, Islamic modes of imagining identity became overlaid by, and merged with, new ideas about *both* Acehnese and Indonesian identity. Political actors were at first hardly aware of the differences between these categories and did not consider that they might come into conflict. During the struggle for Indonesian independence, and even during Darul Islam, Acehnese actors conceived of their bond with the larger Indonesian nation-state in terms of *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, Islamic brotherhood. Their failure to constitute Indonesia on an Islamic basis set many Acehnese on a path of rebellion. The Darul Islam revolt and its resolution set in train a process that ultimately resulted in the rise of Acehnese nationalism defined against Indonesia. There were direct links between these phases of conflict:

most founders of GAM (or their parents) had been involved in Darul Islam, were often personally devout, and believed as strongly as anyone that Aceh's identity was Islamic.

Once the fateful decision was made, however, to reconstitute Aceh's struggle as a separatist one, nationalist activists, over time and almost in spite of themselves, emphasized Islam less. The struggle in Aceh was not one of those separatist conflicts (as in Kashmir or the Southern Philippines) where Muslim minorities seek to break away from majority non-Muslim states and where religious difference reinforces a sense of national separateness. In Aceh, both the secessionist minority *and* the majority of the country from which secession was sought were Muslims. Accordingly, Islam could readily be depicted as a bond reinforcing Aceh's ties with Indonesia. Especially after the fall of Soeharto, government supporters appealed to Islamic unity to undercut separatism. In turn, the urge of identity differentiation pushed Acehnese nationalists to emphasize other factors and even to attack government attempts to Islamize public affairs. The transition from Islamism to nationalism was complete.

The End of Nationalism?

A third line of inquiry is concerned with the surprising resolution of the insurgency. A few years ago the conflict in Aceh looked intractable. Yet in 2005 the government and GAM agreed on a peaceful solution by which Aceh remained part of Indonesia with a form of "self-government." In short order, GAM fighters disarmed and their leaders began to transform their insurgency into an unarmed political movement. One of them even won Aceh's governorship in December 2006 elections. Of course we do not know if this peace process will permanently end armed conflict or secessionist sentiment. Even so, the *volte-face* by nationalist leaders, and the smooth implementation, cries out for analysis: Why could this conflict be resolved in a way that has eluded so many other separatist struggles?

In explaining this change we need to shift from thinking about nationalism as a set of ideas about identity to thinking about it in more purely political terms, as a movement using strategy and tactics. In a comparative study on secession, Viva Bartkus (1999, 216) concludes that "the distinct community's decision to secede can usefully be thought of as a function of its appraisal of its circumstances—in other words, the costs and benefits of both membership and secession, and . . . this appraisal is continuous." Bartkus here draws attention to the shifting strategic calculus that provides much of the dynamism of secessionist struggles. This emphasis is less useful when it comes to understanding

the *origins* of secessionism because it elides the prior question of how the group concerned (or a leadership purporting to represent that group) comes to consider itself to be a "distinct community" for whom secession is conceivable. For this reason much of the present book looks at identity formation. However, rational calculation is important when it comes to understanding dynamics *after* the nation is already naturalized as a basis of political action.

Bartkus notes the possibility of escalation of secessionist demands in the context of a rapid rise in perceived costs of membership in a state, or a perceived reduction in the costs of secession. Such a shift, I explain in Chapter 5, happened with the collapse of the Soeharto government in 1998, triggering sharp escalation of secessionist activity. Suddenly, many players in Aceh thought that the national and international context was propitious for an independence bid. Later events, especially a return to harsh military suppression, caused an equally dramatic reverse shift. Eventually even the most committed nationalists saw that their struggle for independence was, if not at a dead end, at least unlikely to succeed even in the medium term. The December 26, 2004, tsunami reinforced the mood of defeatism, giving rise to willingness by GAM leaders to accede to the Helsinki Memorandum and abandon the independence goal.

In this respect, the analysis presented here accords with other studies of peace processes that emphasize strategic calculations by the conflict parties and a "mutually hurting stalemate" as preconditions for success (Zartman 1985, 2001). But there is more to it: analyses of peacemaking success that stress "ripeness" for peace, a concept pioneered by Zartman, often have the ring of being wise after the fact. Even the bloodiest of conflicts can drag on for years when, to outsiders, it seems obvious that neither side is capable of gaining advantage. This was long the case in Aceh. Acehnese nationalism was characterized by an ethos of blood sacrifice. Many people gave their lives for it when others saw the independence goal as hopelessly unachievable.

Two other arguments on this question are made in this book. One argument is concerned with the international dimension of nationalism: just as Acehnese nationalism arose in a global context of postcolonial self-determination and Cold War, so the later change of heart was facilitated by the politics of the post-Cold War moment, greater international interest in peacemaking, and the greater success that GAM had in making international links. In essence, GAM's success in internationalizing its struggle had the unexpected effect of domesticating it. The second argument is that the changing *form* of nationalism helped to prepare for peace. During the years of authoritarian rule, GAM leaders had propagated an ethnonationalism as harsh and obdurate as the po-

litical context that gave rise to it. Stressing ethnicity, blood, and the duties imposed by history, theirs was a vision that brooked no compromise. After 1998 the new pro-independence activists were immersed in a democratic discourse and milieu, and presented self-determination in human rights terms. In 1999 they argued that Indonesian injustice meant the state had forfeited its social contract with the Acehnese, giving them a right to independence. But a bond that could be cancelled could also be renegotiated. This reworking of the nationalist imagination facilitated compromise. If an authoritarian Indonesia had given rise to Acehnese nationalism, a democratic Indonesia might be able to accommodate it.

How the Book Is Organized

The book aims to provide two main services to the reader. First, it presents a historical overview of the Aceh conflict, focusing on the period between the declaration of GAM's revolt in 1976 and the signing of the Helsinki Memorandum in 2005. It also briefly discusses the historical background, and what came next. The intention here is to provide a self-contained guide to this period of Aceh's modern history. Second, it situates the discussion of Aceh in comparative and theoretical debates about nationalism, Islam, and internal conflict. The Aceh conflict, although unique, also had many striking parallels with events elsewhere in the world, and it is hoped that the book will make its own modest contributions to the comparative study of nationalism and internal conflict.

To serve these dual ends, each chapter is designed to do two things. First, each focuses on a distinct historical period. Thus the reader can start at the beginning of the book and progress chronologically through the prelude, early phases, peak, and resolution of the conflict. Second, each chapter also brings to bear one or two theoretical perspectives derived from a wider literature. Although the analyses presented in the various chapters interconnect, they do not build on each other in a linear fashion. Instead, the reader can open to any chapter and read a self-contained argument from an analytically distinct perspective. For this reason, although each chapter concentrates on a discrete historical period, parts of each chapter also range freely through history to bring in additional evidence.

Chapter 2 looks at nationalism as *historical process*. It looks back briefly at Aceh during the precolonial, colonial, and early Indonesian independence periods. It reviews the evidence for a widely shared sense of Acehnese identity in early history, and finds little. Instead, the primary framework for understanding identity and alterity, and for mobilizing people, was provided by Islam. It

was only the experiences of colonial rule and resistance to it that began to give rise to anything approximating Acehnese ethnic consciousness, but this consciousness was intertwined with Indonesian identity, and both were still understood in Islamic terms. It was the early postcolonial experiences that created the ideological context in which Acehnese nationalism appeared.

Chapter 3 focuses on nationalism as *constructed identity*. It looks at the early years of GAM's insurgency, beginning in 1976, when Hasan di Tiro returned from exile and proclaimed independence. His movement did not immediately strike deep roots and was quickly suppressed. Di Tiro saw his main task as ideological: to convince the Acehnese that they were not Indonesians.[4] Chapter 3 therefore presents the book's main analysis of Acehnese nationalist ideology. It stresses the novelty of di Tiro's vision of an ancient Acehnese nation, and points out that this vision was shaped above all by two goals: differentiating Aceh from Indonesia and reaching toward membership in the international system.

Chapter 4 presents a study of GAM during the long years of the New Order regime, especially attempts to revive the movement in the late 1980s, and the army's bloody response. Here attention moves to the *social context* that sustained nationalism. Two chief sources for the movement's resilience are found: the social structures and beliefs that suffused rural Acehnese society, and the condition of exile experienced by the movement's supporters. At the micro level, nationalism relied on kinship networks, ties of locality and friendship, ideals of manhood, and folk Islam; exile provided nationalist leaders with both secure locations in which to imagine independence, and resources with which to prosecute a separatist war. Nationalism grew from this fusion of the parochial and the global.

Chapter 5 looks at the brief period after the fall of the Soeharto government in 1998, when pro-independence campaigning came into the open. It focuses on a series of massive pro-referendum mobilizations in 1999, when many Acehnese believed that independence was imminent. The chapter, in other words, views nationalism as *mobilizational event*. It looks at the new breed of nationalist activists who organized the protests, and it explains how their views differed from those of GAM, emphasizing Acehnese experiences of maltreatment during Indonesian rule rather than Aceh's precolonial history. The new activists also spoke in terms of respect for democratic principles and universal human rights. The chapters look at how, during this period, members of Aceh's Indonesian elite promoted a compromise solution based on "special autonomy," and at how this brief political opening eventually closed.

Chapter 6 looks at Acehnese nationalism as *insurgency*. It concentrates on the period between 1999 and about 2003, when GAM's armed rebellion peaked, coinciding with and then overtaking the mobilizations described in the preceding chapter. Here the analytical lens is on the violent methods used by GAM guerillas, and on the political economy that sustained them. The chapter suggests that although ideologically the conflict was a zero-sum struggle between two sides, in the field there were many subterranean links between them. In particular, the GAM insurgents funded themselves by parasitizing the patrimonial networks that infused the Indonesian state, and by feeding on a shadow economy that grew around the conflict.

Chapter 7 reviews the relationship between Islam and nationalism. It traces a gradual secularization of opposition in Aceh, culminating in GAM's rejection of the implementation of Islamic law in the post-Soeharto period. It ascribes this secularization to several factors, including the movement's attempts to garner Western support, and the co-optation of religious authority by the state. Most important was the imperative of differentiating Aceh's identity from that of Indonesia, an imperative that turned Acehnese nationalists away from Islam just as state leaders embraced it as a way to defeat the insurgency.

Finally, in Chapter 8 we turn to the reasons that the movement agreed to end its independence struggle, and to how it sold that decision to its followers. Although the main explanation addresses the movement's changed assessment of its prospects after the Indian Ocean tsunami and several years of intensified Indonesian military offensives, the chapter also emphasizes how a strategy of internationalization encouraged GAM leaders to compromise, how the post-Soeharto transformation of nationalism allowed them to recast their struggle as one for democratic participation, and how their reintegration into official politics and society was facilitated by a patrimonial shadow economy.

2

Aceh, Islam, and Indonesia

Historical Roots of Integration and Secession

> Islam has a position which is very special in the life of Indonesian nationalism, because Islam is the only force which unites a majority of the peoples of Indonesia, whose environment, history, nationalities, languages, economic interests, politics and traditions and customs had never known that unity.
>
> *di Tiro 1958, 36*

A defining debate in the literature on nationalism over the last two decades has been concerned with whether nations are old and durable entities, with origins stretching into antiquity, or whether they are fundamentally modern. One camp is represented by *modernists*, who argue that national awareness was a novelty of the modern age and arose only as a result of modern processes. For Ernest Gellner (1983), the key driver was industrialization and its need for "context-free" communication in a shared language and, hence, for a universal education system; for Benedict Anderson (1983) it was print capitalism and the appearance of a new, linear concept of time (among other factors); and for Eric Hobsbawm (1990) the rise of the citizen-state was key. Other scholars (such as Smith 1986, Armstrong 1982, Hutchinson 2005) see the roots of national awareness in premodern times and emphasize that nationalists do not act on a blank slate but instead draw on the myths, cultures, and beliefs of preexisting ethnic communities.

These debates are relevant in the case of Aceh. In scholarly literature on Aceh there is a disjuncture, although it is rarely made explicit. Most political scientists stress the contingency of recent discontent, viewing it as a response

to actions by the Indonesian state. They are, as it were, instinctive modernists, but they rarely ask why discontent was expressed as a defense of Acehnese identity, or where that identity came from. In contrast, when historians with an eye to the *longue durée* turn their attention to the conflict, some do cite deep historical roots of Acehnese identity. The distinguished historian of Aceh, Anthony Reid, for instance, argues that Aceh "was formed by the conquests of the 16th-century sultanate, and sustained by the way in which this sultanate resisted foreign domination. Aceh is alone (in competition with Batavia/Jakarta) as an identity fashioned by a coastal state over four centuries, the memory of which was still vigorous in the 20th century" (Reid 2005, 339). As a result, "there was enough distinctiveness in its historical development since the 16th century to make the separatist ideology believable when it emerged in the 1970s" (Reid 2005, 337).

Problems arise with such analysis when, following Brubaker (1996, 1998, 2002), we think of ethnicities or nations not as "real groups" existing independently of and prior to consciousness but as a "category of practice." If we are searching in history for evidence of an Acehnese nation as a "real" entity, it would be enough to look for proxies that might stand in for it—for example, an Acehnese language or state. If we are viewing identity as a form of practice, it becomes important to ask how people in Aceh in the past categorized and understood themselves in relation to people both with whom they felt connected and against whom they defined themselves. The presence of a state or a language in premodern times does not necessarily suggest that the people who were ruled by that state or who used that language felt they possessed a common identity; and although Acehnese who listened to separatist arguments in the 1970s may have seen much in "their" history to validate those arguments, the identity thus evoked did not necessarily authentically reproduce how their ancestors viewed themselves or their place in the world.

This chapter provides a brief historical background to the late-twentieth-century separatist conflict. In doing so it outlines, for readers who may not be familiar with them, key phases in Aceh's history: the precolonial sultanate, the war with the Dutch in the late nineteenth century, the impact of colonialism, the war for Indonesian independence in the 1940s, and the first major revolt against Indonesian control in the 1950s, Darul Islam. It highlights four historical myths generated in these periods, myths that set the parameters for later debates about Acehnese identity. As well as providing background, the chapter reviews the historical record in search of the origins of the Acehnese identity on which separatist nationalism was founded.

To anticipate one key finding: the chapter argues that there is little evidence from before the twentieth century of a widely shared, conscious Acehnese identity, and there is even less to suggest that such an identity was a basis of mobilization, even during war. Acehnese identity as a category of practice emerged only during the early twentieth century, under the impact of colonial modernity. The chapter also suggests, however, that the colonial period saw not merely a transformation from premodern and prenational conceptions of identity to modern and national ones, but also a complex intermeshing of three distinct frameworks. Two of these frameworks (Acehnese and Indonesian) were territorial, cultural, and new; the third was based on Islam. The new Acehnese identity was nestled inside an overarching Indonesian one, and these two identities were not conceived as being in conflict; indeed, there was little consideration of how precisely they might interact. Both identities also evolved out of, overlapped with, and in large part drew their affective power from an earlier Islamic framework for conceiving identity and alterity.

Before the twentieth century, Acehnese resistance to outside powers was largely conceived in terms of a division between believers and unbelievers rather than between Acehnese and others. In the mid-twentieth century, most Acehnese saw Islam as crucial to both the Acehnese and the Indonesian identities. It was not simply that Aceh, Indonesia, and Islam were layered identities (to use a common phrase); they were virtually synonymous. Achieving Indonesian independence, upholding Acehnese tradition, and achieving an ideal Islamic society were seen as a single goal by the forces that led Aceh through the revolution that threw off Dutch rule in 1945–1949.

The period after Indonesian independence was achieved saw a fracturing of these three identities. It was not that they were delegitimated or even that they no longer overlapped. People still thought of themselves as being simultaneously Muslim, Acehnese, and Indonesian. Rather, awareness was growing that these identities were distinct fields, that their boundaries did not necessarily coincide, that they could suggest different imperatives, and that conflict, especially between Indonesian and the other two identities, was possible. This sounds abstract but in practice it was not. Rather, a series of political battles played out both within Acehnese society and between actors in Aceh and allies and foes elsewhere, producing some bitter lessons. In particular, many Acehnese learned that Indonesia—not as an amorphous identity to which to aspire but as a politico-legal order, a state, and an army—limited their ability to achieve their goals for Aceh, for Islam, and for Indonesia itself. In particular, the defeat of their Islamic aspirations, which had been the glue binding Aceh and Indonesia together, prepared the way for a narrowing of their focus on

Aceh and for an Acehnese nationalism that later concluded that being Acehnese and being Indonesian were incompatible.

But Acehnese nationalism also drew on two additional processes described at the end of this chapter. One process was happening locally, within Aceh, the other was happening internationally. Recognition of Aceh as a "special territory" (the key compromise that ended the Darul Islam revolt) led to a normalization and institutionalization of Acehnese identity as a basis for political action; Hasan di Tiro's travels in U.S. Cold War networks provided him with a context for reimagining Aceh as a nation struggling for recognition on a global stage.

Before Colonialism

Most evidence suggests that before the twentieth century Aceh was a stratified society in which people identified themselves by their social location rather than in terms of a broader, horizontal identity as Acehnese. The horizontal identification that counted was *Islamic*.

The early history of Acehnese-speaking people is not known with certainty. Linguists classify Acehnese as a Chamic language, thus linking the population to that of the kingdom of Champa in central and southern Vietnam. Although it is also part of the broader Austronesian family of languages, Acehnese is from a different subgroup than Malay, the dominant language in nearby coastal territories on Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula (although contemporary Acehnese has close connections with that language also). According to linguists, the degree of divergence of Acehnese from other Chamic languages suggests that Acehnese speakers originated on the Southeast Asian mainland but migrated from it perhaps a thousand years ago (Thurgood 1999, 57).

Early records suggest that there were several small polities based on ports and estuaries in northern Sumatra when Islam was first introduced to the region in the thirteenth century. Aceh itself, however, became important only in the early sixteenth century, when several "sharply divided states were . . . united as part of the reaction to the Portuguese intrusion" (Reid 1969, 2). Over the following 150 years Aceh was the dominant power on the Malacca Strait; its wealth was based on its ability to dominate trade, which in turn depended on military and naval power. At its peak, the sultanate could mobilize a fleet of galleys, each carrying up to eight hundred crew members, and an army of nine hundred elephants and forty thousand men (Lombard 1986, 114–122). The sultanate was essentially a coastal empire; its armies were able to make vassals of the inhabitants of port cities and their surrounding areas in peninsular Malaya and along several hundred kilometers of the east and west coasts of Sumatra.

Aceh's prestige reached its zenith during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636), a despotic ruler who terrorized the merchant class but also ran a brilliant court at which displays of wealth and pomp dazzled foreign visitors. This period provides Aceh with its first great historical myth: that of the golden age, the time of greatness that will be a recurrent motif for later sultans, rebels, Islamic scholars, Indonesian nationalists, and secessionists alike.

Over successive centuries, with the rise of a rival Malay center in Johor, the decline of Islamic trade across the Indian Ocean, the growth of European power, and crippling internal conflicts, Aceh went into long decline. Its power was much reduced by the mid-nineteenth century, when the Dutch began to turn their attention to Aceh. By this time, the territorial reach of the sultanate was more or less coterminous with the territories inhabited by the Acehnese-speaking population.

Throughout these centuries, the political and social organization in Aceh as well as the attendant patterns of ideological consciousness were typical of the organization found in premodern polities. The politically salient social divisions were horizontal divisions between classes, not vertical divisions between ethnic groups. Society was hierarchical: at the apex of the system was the sultan; lower down were a variety of court officials and subordinate rulers. By the eve of the Dutch conquest, the sultan had little effective authority, and Aceh was no longer merely a coastal polity. Instead, a system of territorial vassal lords, or *uleebalang*, ruled their territories in the interior with much latitude, even though they were appointed on the basis of letters patent (*sarakata*) by the sultan and owed allegiance to him. The great Dutch orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, who came to Aceh to advise the colonial authorities how best to subjugate the territory, saw the *uleebalang* as European feudal rulers (Snouck Hurgronje 1906, vol. 1, 88). In his critique of Snouck, James Siegel (1969, 9–10) argues that the *uleebalang* derived their power from control of trade rather than of territory, but he agreed that in practice they were independent. At the bottom of the social hierarchy were the peasants, who lived in a state of fear of the *uleebalang* and their armed retinues (Siegel 1969, 30–31; Snouck Hurgronje 1906, vol. 1, 118–119). Slaves were numerous in the seventeenth century (Lombard 1986, 78), and less so in the nineteenth century (Snouck Hurgronje 1906, vol. 1, 19–20).

This kind of political arrangement was not likely to encourage a strong sense of horizontal ethnic identity. It seems that for most people the salient territorial identities were local. Snouck observed that "the Achehnese speak of 'the country' (*nanggròë*) of ulèëbalang so and so" (Snouck Hurgronje 1906, vol. 1, 88).[1] Siegel (1969, 35) disagreed that the *nanggroe* were significant for

peasants but pointed to an even smaller unit as a site of identification: "Men did not identify themselves by their membership in a particular nanggrou (whereas *gampong*, village, was a central term of identification)." Moreover, as Siegel (1969, 68, cited in Kell 1995, 46) argues, Aceh was not even a "vertically integrated society"; rather, the chief groups (the *uleebalang*, the *ulama* [religious scholars], the peasants, and the sultan and his retinue) were "encapsulated groups" that "did not interpenetrate but met only at their boundaries." Even the *uleebalang* "had few ties with villagers whom they supposedly ruled," and their revenues were derived from control of trade rather than from administration of law and territory.

Ethnicity played no role in the ideology of the court or government. As in the other polyglot port states of Southeast Asia during the early modern period, the port of Aceh was cosmopolitan, drawing Arabs, Indians, and others, with each living in a separate compound. Cosmopolitanism was also a feature of the ruling group. As Snouck Hurgronje put it, "The Sultans of Acheh were in part Malayan, in part Arab, and in part—as with the line of princes who have now occupied the throne for more than a century and a half—of Bugis origin. The great literati or holy men were almost without exception foreigners, and the same is true of many of the rich traders and high officials" (Snouck Hurgronje 1906, vol. 1, 47–48). Nor did the high culture of the court and the elite accentuate distinctively Acehnese features. Instead it emphasized links with the wider Malay and Islamic worlds. During its golden age, Aceh was a bilingual society with "a thriving written literary court culture in Malay, and an equally vital oral (and later written) non-court tradition in Acehnese" (Andaya 2001, 45). Malay was the language of the court, of trade, and of intellectual life. As a result, "in the sixteenth century Aceh was considered to be a Malay kingdom" (Andaya 2001, 45). Even in the nineteenth century, Snouck Hurgronje still observed that "the works employed by the Achehnese for the pursuit of their various branches of learning, are . . . written in Malay or Arabic" (1906, vol. 2, 67).

What made Aceh stand out from its neighbors was Islam. Aceh's location at the northwestern tip of Sumatra made it the first point of contact with Arab and Indian traders visiting the archipelago, and it was likely the first site of significant conversions to Islam in the region. The oldest known Islamic kingdom in Southeast Asia was Pase (near present-day Lhokseumawe), and in the centuries following that kingdom Aceh was known as a center of Islamic learning and a model of Islamic rule. Royal patronage attracted great Islamic scholars, and other courts looked to Aceh for guidance on Islamic law. The court distinguished itself not by stressing its Acehnese character but by modeling itself on

three glorious contemporaneous empires—the Ottomans, the Safavis in Persia, and the Mughal Timuris in India—with whom there was direct and indirect interchange (Andaya 2001, 63). By the mid-nineteenth century, Aceh had declined and was no longer seen as a model Malay kingdom; yet the association of the sultanate with Islam lived on, as did the memory of its Islamic golden age under Sultan Iskandar Muda and his successors.

It is possible that a widely shared Acehnese identity had begun to develop over the intervening centuries. After the seventeenth century, Aceh declined as a significant power and was gradually transformed from an outward-looking coastal and trading polity into a defensive and inland one, with a growing corpus of literary works in Acehnese rather than Malay. As Leonard Andaya (2001, 65) puts it, "From being a model of Malayness in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Aceh in the nineteenth century had become an Acehnese-speaking kingdom with an Acehnese identity defined by its continuing strong adherence to Islam." Yet if there *was* a strongly developed sense of shared Acehnese identity in the nineteenth century, few sources hint at it. (Andaya provides no evidence, at least in terms consistent with our present inquiry.[2]) If we think of an identity as primarily a "category of practice" and thus as a basis of mobilization, we should expect that identity to be obvious when subjected to external threat, such as invasion. In Aceh, however, the defining wars were with Christian interlopers, and they reinforced a religious understanding of identity and alterity, rather than an ethnic or national one.

The Dutch War

In April 1873, a Dutch fleet arrived off the port of Aceh. After the sultan did not respond satisfactorily to the Dutch ultimatum, a force of three thousand men disembarked from the ships. They met strong resistance and were forced to retreat. The general in charge was killed. This defeat was an unprecedented humiliation, "the most decisive repulse ever given to Dutch arms in the East" (Reid 1969, 96). A second invasion the following January succeeded in taking the sultan's palace after about a month of fighting. So began three decades of conflict during which the Dutch vacillated between asserting themselves militarily and restraining themselves in order to attain the voluntary submission of their foes (Reid 1969, 182). They faced fierce, albeit sporadic and decentralized, resistance led by local chiefs, religious leaders, and adventurers. By the late nineteenth century, some foreign observers were already calling this conflict "the longest war of the nineteenth century" and speaking of the "daring and apparently invincible Achinese" (*Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1897). Finally, in 1898 the Dutch adopted a more aggressive posture, partly at

the urging of Snouck Hurgronje, who advocated ruthless pursuit of all armed bands. Once this approach had begun, it brought victory quickly (Reid 1969, 270–283). In 1903 the sultan surrendered, and from 1910 to 1912 the remnants of resistance, by then long led by *ulama*, were wiped out.

If the seventeenth century provided Aceh with its golden age, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave us Aceh's second great myth: that of the heroic struggle for self-preservation. Yet on the Acehnese side, the conflict with the Dutch was a war of a prenational age, expressed in the language of pan-Islam and understood through a prism that divided the world into Muslims and unbelievers rather than into Acehnese and others. Aceh's political structures, its stratified social structure, and the ideology of its ruling class all militated against a "national" understanding of the war and inhibited society-wide mobilization. Most *uleebalang* thought first of defending their own territories. The Dutch were aware of this:

> The great defect in most of the hereditary chiefs consisted and still consists in this, that their religious and political convictions never impel them to action on behalf of *Acheh;* they wait as long as possible to see whether their own territory will be threatened. . . . The obvious result is that even the most frugal and kafir-hating [unbeliever-hating] Achehnese soon abandon a contest with superior forces under such circumstances. [Snouck Hurgronje 1906, vol. 1, 174]

Although some *uleebalang* did resist, the Dutch were able to come to terms with most of them individually. Following the pattern they adopted in other parts of the Indies, the Dutch left in place the *uleebalang* who recognized their overlordship, preserved and reinforced many of the privileges of these *uleebalang*, and used them to rule the rest of the population. As the Dutch slowly gained ground in this way, leadership of the armed resistance passed to the *ulama*, including the most prominent of them all, Tengku Cik di Tiro (the great *ulama* in Tiro), Muhammad Saman. The strength of the *ulama*, according to Siegel (1969, 73–74), was that "they appealed to the peasants because they stressed the unity of all men despite the social identities which separated them. And associated with this appeal was an idea of personal transition that urged them to leave behind the ties of kinship in order to unite as Muslims." In other words, it was "their common identity as Muslims" (Siegel 1969, 77) that united the fighters—not, one might add, their identity as Acehnese.

The *ulama* declared the fight against the Dutch to be a holy war, and participation in that fight to be incumbent upon Muslims. This outlook was expressed in popular literature, the *hikayat* (epic verses), which were recited in village prayer halls, at the houses of *uleebalang*, and in religious schools.[3] Some of these *hikayat*, collectively known as the *hikayat prang sabi* (epic of

the holy war), were variations of an Acehnese reworking of Abd al-Samad of Palembang's polemical *Fadail al-Jihad* (the merits of jihad).[4] The Acehnese version consists mostly of Qur'anic injunctions and tales of wars fought in the time of the Prophet Muhammad or in early Islamic history. Some of the *hikayat* also offer descriptions of life in Dutch-ruled territories and of fighting, although these too are filled with religious explication, portents, and miracles. Indeed, some of the *hikayat* mingle tales of prophetic times and the war against the Dutch, a style typical of the nonlinear conception of time found in premodern societies. (One of the *hikayat* [Alfian 1992, 23] has forces of the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia fighting against Dutch infidels.)

The theme of the *hikayat* is not the defense of Aceh but rather the prosecution of holy war against infidels. The verses are filled with accounts of individuals who renounce earthly activities to take up the greater "reward" of holy war, and with descriptions of the heavenly rewards that await those who die as martyrs. The protagonists have wondrous dreams of paradise and heavenly nymphs that make them reluctant to think of "anything else than of trading their body as dowry for the beauties" (Iskandar 1986, 107). Death on the battlefield is a beautiful experience compared to the loneliness of the grave and the tortures after death that await those who do not die in war (Alfian 1992, 47, 163). To be sure, some verses speak of the need to defend the *nanggroe*; however, the word *nanggroe* is used with varying meanings, applying to the whole of Aceh when context demands, but also describing wider territories (such as "nanggroe Sumatra" [Wieringa 1998, 306]) or narrower ones (see, for example, Iskandar 1986, 107). One surviving version of the epic does not even mention Aceh, and its author writes in Acehnese only "so that even the ignorant can understand it" (Damsté 1928, 599; cited in Henley 1995, 53). Another version (Alfian 1992) uses the word *Aceh* only four times in 1576 lines of verse. When the word *Aceh* is used, it mostly describes the main port and the seat of the sultan. The territorial units that interest the authors of the *hikayat* are the lands of particular *uleebalang* (see, for example, Drewes 1980, 81, 83).

The vision of alterity in the holy war literature is one of faith. The enemies are described most commonly as *kaphe Belanda* (Dutch infidels), but also simply as "infidels," "Dutch," "Jews," "enemies of God," and so on. The *ulama* saw the Dutch not so much as a national or even an earthly enemy but instead "as part of a condition of Atjehnese society that springs from the neglect of religion" (Siegel 1979, 232). As one *hikayat* puts it, "For ten years the war has now been going on, because the faithful on earth have been very ignorant. Because you did not obey God's commandments and you ignored the words of the *ulama*" (Wieringa 1998, 305). The *ulama* were concerned not only with

resisting the invaders but also with Islamizing society. These two endeavors were indissolubly linked. In both of them, the main rivals were the *uleebalang*, whom the *ulama* castigated not only for collaborating with the Dutch but also for their impiety.

Colonialism

The standard story of Indonesian nationalism is a story of an inexorably rising tide absorbing local identities or settling comfortably over them. Indonesia was a novel idea in the early twentieth century. Employment in the colonial bureaucracy, a new Malay-language press, modern education, new ideas about progress and native "uplift," and growth of a modern economy, transportation, and industry—such phenomena brought together members of different ethnic groups and allowed them to conceive of identity in new ways. Modern political identities of many kinds came into being, including local Sumatran, Minahasan, Ambonese, and other nationalisms (Henley 1995; Reid 2005, 30–33). In standard accounts, however, these identities are subsumed under an overarching Indonesian unity prompted by the shared experiences of living under the same colonial state. From the 1920s on, nationalists such as Sukarno made unity central to Indonesian identity and stressed shared opposition to the Dutch. Key events in the Indonesian national narrative, such as the famous Youth Pledge of 1928, celebrated the conscious coming together of disparate groups to make up one Indonesian nation.

In Aceh, after the back of the *ulama*-led resistance was broken, the *uleebalang* became, as did traditional leaders in other parts of the archipelago, the chief layer through whom the Dutch exercised control. Some *uleebalang* were affected by the spirit of the age and agitated for reform; most became unpopular for their mistreatment of the population (Reid 1979a, 15). The contrast deepened between the *uleebalang* and the *ulama*, who largely withdrew into the world of the *dayah* (the traditional Islamic boarding schools) and continued to teach "negative *kafir*-hate" (Reid 1969, 282). In the 1920s and 1930s there were occasional violent outbreaks in which small groups of men would recite the *hikayat prang sabi* and swear oaths to fight together. There were also individual suicidal attacks, known as *Atjeh-moorden*, on Dutch officials (Reid 1979a, 9–11). Although the Dutch felt that their hold on the population was tenuous, militarily they were in control. Trumpeting the progress they were bringing to Aceh, they built modern transportation infrastructure, including ports, major roads, and a rail line to Medan; and they invested in plantations, oil, and other sectors of the economy. The urban population grew, there was a rapid influx of migrants, and the era of modern education began.

In Aceh, economic and social modernization, and the new ideas it fostered, had effects similar to those in other parts of the archipelago. Not surprisingly, the spirit of progress took Islamic form, and Islamic modernism became a mass force. Part of a movement emanating from the Middle East, Islamic modernism argued that over the centuries Islam had been weakened by impurities and that in order to throw off colonial dominance it was necessary both to purify the faith and to absorb whatever was useful in Western learning. Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, several Acehnese *ulama* began to modernize Islamic education in the territory by establishing *madrasah*, schools that fused religious instruction with a secular curriculum. Modernist *ulama*, notably Daud Beureueh and Teungku Hasballah Indrapuri, toured the villages, preaching the need for Islamic revival. Eventually, in 1939, the modernist *ulama* formed Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh, or PUSA, the All-Aceh Association of Ulama. Within a few years PUSA claimed a membership of forty thousand, with one hundred thousand in its youth wing (Sulaiman 1997, 54, fn. 69).

PUSA seemed to exemplify Acehnese localism. It was an exclusively Acehnese affair. Most Indonesia-wide organizations were weak in Aceh; even Muhammadiyah, the main vehicle of modernist Muslims elsewhere, was in Aceh "an urban-based, largely non-Acehnese, organization" (Morris 1983, 78). Moreover, the concerns of PUSA's leaders seemed parochial and to demonstrate a revivalist concern with Aceh's past glories, especially the golden age of the Sultanate (Jacoeb 1940; Sulaiman 1997, 54–55). In the words of PUSA's first public statement:

> The only intention and aim of this association is none other and nothing more than the mere attempt to proclaim, uphold, and maintain the greatness of the holy Islamic religion, especially in the land of Aceh, which had bestowed upon it the name of "Mecca's Verandah" in its past golden age, but which for some time now has become a country left far behind by its near neighbors, let alone those more distant, and which has for so long remained in the valley of unbelief and darkness. [Arif c. 1951, 18]

There may have been a basis for such localism in the growing awareness of Acehnese difference that came with the arrival of the Dutch; even some of the wartime *hikayat* stress the contrast between the atmosphere in Aceh and the moral degeneration in regions already ruled by the Dutch (Penders 1977, 210–214). Later the Dutch brought in, or attracted, "native" traders, administrators, and others from other parts of the archipelago, whose arrival stoked suspicions of outsiders (Reid 1979a, 19–20).

In two crucial respects, however, PUSA did not exemplify localism. First, the aim of the PUSA leaders was, in the words of Eric Morris (1983, 84),

not to "restore an idealized version of the 'golden age'" but rather to attain a "glorious future, where all Muslims would be united through religious law." In short, it was the idea of Aceh as exemplar of Islamic virtue that interested the reformist *ulama*. They did not celebrate all aspects of Acehnese tradition; indeed, they saw many customary practices as deviations that had to be suppressed (Morris 1983, 75–93; Sulaiman 1997, 36–55). Some of these practices, such as pilgrimages to grave sites and praying at the tombs of saints for intercession, were traditional ways of remembering the past (Siegel 2005). During the revolution, when the *ulama* had unhindered authority in the territory, they banned such practices (Morris 1985, 101–102). Historical revivals, such as the one in Aceh in the 1940s, never bring back the past in its original form but are always selective.

Second, PUSA leaders' concerns with Aceh, with its glorious past and subsequent decline, were expressed in a broader Islamic and Indonesian framework. One publication written to coincide with the first PUSA congress stressed that the *ulama* were trying to restore Islam's greatness as part of a worldwide movement to make "Islam respected by the whole world and its followers esteemed from the borders of France to the wall of the Manchu kingdom" (Jacoeb 1940, 21). Another source argued that those who said there was no Indonesian nationhood (*kebangsaan*) were wrong because since the time of Aceh's greatness, Javanese, Minangkabau, and others had come to Aceh to study Islam; then, during Aceh's decline, the flow had been reversed:

> All of that shows how one can find connections within the Indonesian archipelago since olden times. Coming and going, making pilgrimages to each others' lands, is not something that has begun recently, but has been going on for centuries. The unity we proclaim now continues the unity proclaimed by our ancestors in the past. The nationhood we illuminate now continues that of ancient times . . . . Where are there ties of nationhood stronger than a unity of interest that has lasted for centuries? A feeling of being one *bangsa* [nation] that has existed since olden times? [Jacoeb 1940, 8–9]

The image of the Indonesian islands being bound together by the travels of Islamic scholars was reinforced by many articles in the Indonesian language press of Aceh in the 1930s and 1940s that depicted Islam as linking the Acehnese to other inhabitants of the archipelago:

> In general, of those who are called *inlander* [Dutch for *natives*] more or less fifty million in number are Muslims, sharing one religion of equality, of unity. They care not if *loe*, *koee*, *engkau*, or *kamoe* [terms for the second-person pronoun used in different regions of the archipelago] are Acehnese, Batak, Padang, Javanese, or Sundanese, or even Hindustani or Chinese. So long as you are Muslims, you are brothers. [Agam 1930, 2; see also T.M.O. 1929]

Writing about the first mass-based "modern" political organization in the Indies—the *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Union) in Java—Takashi Shiraishi (1990, 57) says that "Islam was no more and no less than the signifier of the yet nameless nation of the natives." In Aceh in the 1940s, the new signifier, *Indonesia*, had arrived; but it simply rested on top of the old matrix that divided the world between Muslims and unbelievers, barely unsettling it. Moreover, Islam was in equal measure a signifier of *both* Indonesia and Aceh. Acehnese leaders assumed that the three identities were in harmony. Being Acehnese was being part of a broader Indonesian identity, and both were based on Islam and tied together by it.

Revolution

During the brief Japanese occupation of the Indies (from 1942 to 1945), in Aceh as elsewhere the Japanese trained and armed young fighters, gave some local leaders administrative jobs, and encouraged Indonesian nationalism. When Japan surrendered and Allied and Dutch forces began to return to the archipelago in late 1945, a social revolution broke out in Aceh. Forces led by modernist *ulama* launched an all-out assault on the *uleebalang*, killing hundreds of them, forcing others to flee, and confiscating their property (Morris 1985; Sulaiman 1997, 114–64; Reid 1979a, 185–217). This was the end of *uleebalang* power. The *ulama* and their allies now enjoyed unrivalled mastery.

Over the next four years Aceh became a bastion of the Indonesian revolution. Former head of PUSA Daud Beureueh became in July 1947 the military governor of Aceh and of the neighboring Langkat and Karo areas. By late 1948 the Dutch had retaken all other important areas of the republic, but they never dared to land their forces on Aceh's mainland. For a brief time at the end of the war, Aceh hosted the emergency government that was formed after the Dutch captured the republican leaders in Yogyakarta, Java, and was headed by deputy prime minister Sjafruddin Prawiranegara. In 1948, when President Sukarno visited the territory and pleaded for gold to buy an airplane as an "air bridge" between the islands of the country, Acehnese merchants responded by donating enough to buy two Dakotas. Thus was born the third great myth of Aceh's history: that of Aceh as backbone of Indonesia's national liberation.

During the revolution, the interpenetration of Acehnese, Islamic, and Indonesian identities reached a high point. Acehnese revolution-era texts typically blur together Acehnese, Indonesian, and Islamic referents; indeed, the terms *Aceh*, *Islam*, and *Indonesia* sometimes are virtually synonymous. Indonesian independence was a way to realize Islamic goals and to restore Aceh's lost

grandeur, which was in any case based on Islam. A declaration released by the Laksar Moedjahidin, one of the groups that attacked the *uleebalang*, in December 1945 put it this way:

Freedom!

Now the Moedjahidin headquarters is taking steps to achieve our goal,
namely the State of the Republic of Indonesia.
To all Muslims!
Join the ranks of the Moedjahidin, stand together, sell your soul to Allah
to redeem our religion and homeland;
To all Muslims!
Repent to Allah of all your errors;
Increase your service to Allah;
Struggle for Allah, for religion and for your homeland;
Care for your sovereign homeland; guard over it.
Recite frequently the hikayat prang sabi, heirloom of spirit from
our great leader Tgk Tjhik di Tiro.

[Talsya 1990, 152]

In such statements we can judge just how far Acehnese conceptions of identity had shifted in the two generations since the Dutch war. Here we see new terms such as *homeland* (*tanah air*) and *nation* (*bangsa*) that did not appear in the holy war literature fifty years earlier. Yet there is also continuity. The protagonists portray their struggle as a continuation of the earlier conflict, and they divide adversaries between Muslims and *kafir*. They also use some similar terminology (for example, the description of fighting the Dutch as a payment offered to God was probably drawn from versions of the hikayat prang sabi still in circulation).

Even so, Acehnese leaders slowly became aware that their revolution was proceeding differently than the revolution elsewhere in Indonesia. During the revolution the *ulama* could organize their own affairs as they pleased. They empowered Islamic courts, banned practices that they viewed as impious, and funded *madrasah*. Although Aceh's leaders "did not during the revolution openly press their claims for an Islamic state on the beleaguered Republican central leadership" (Morris 1985, 101), they were aware that this leadership had a mostly secular orientation. Hence, for example, Daud Beureueh extracted a promise from President Sukarno during the latter's first visit to the province in 1947 that Aceh (as opposed to Indonesia as a whole) would be allowed to implement Islamic law after independence. When he asked Sukarno to put this promise in writing, the president tearfully responded that this would not be necessary (Ibrahimy 2001, 78). Thus was laid the foundation for the fourth great myth of modern Acehnese history: that of the broken promise.

Revolt

In September 1953, Daud Beureueh declared that Aceh was "separating" from the Indonesian republic and instead joining with the Negara Islam Indonesia (NII, or Islamic State of Indonesia), created earlier by Kartosuwirjo in West Java. The revolt was a serious challenge to the central government. It was led by the *ulama* and their allies who had headed Aceh's struggle against the Dutch. They mobilized about ten thousand fighters (Sulaiman 1997, 292) but failed to achieve their initial military goals, which were to seize all of Aceh and to defend it along the border with North Sumatra. For the following eight years the conflict became a grinding guerilla war. It was eventually resolved by negotiations that led the government to recognize Aceh as a special territory in 1959. Daud himself resisted in the uplands until 1962.

Different interpretations of this revolt are possible. Some authors stress the movement's links to the wider Darul Islam revolt (in addition to Kartosuwirjo's rebellion in West Java, there were allied rebellions in Sulawesi and Kalimantan) and to its Islamic goals, preferring not to see the movement as parochially motivated (Christie 1996, van Dijk 1981, Bertrand 2004). Others argue that it was based on a sense of Acehnese distinctiveness and aimed at regaining the autonomy that Aceh had won in the revolutionary years (see, for example, Sjamsuddin 1985, 38–39, 102–103). Isa Sulaiman (1997) stresses fissures within Acehnese society, especially the recrudescence of the *uleebalang-ulama* conflict, and conflict between traditionalist and modernist *ulama*. In fact, as most authors have recognized, each of these elements played a part.

The revolt resulted from political tensions in Aceh that began to mount almost as soon as Indonesian independence was achieved in December 1949. A precipitating factor was the abolition of Aceh's provincial status in August 1950. Aceh's leaders had only recently persuaded Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, the head of Indonesia's emergency government, to make Aceh a separate province. But the central government was committed to administrative simplification whereby Indonesia would be divided into ten provinces, and it feared that recognizing Aceh's claims would prompt other areas to demand similar treatment (Sjamsuddin 1985, 44).

Provincial fusion provided material reasons for resistance. PUSA loyalists still dominated the lower levels of government but were now subordinated to superiors from Java and Medan (Gelanggang 1956, 17). The government moved troops loyal to PUSA out of the province and replaced them with non-Acehnese, cut funding to religious schools, and reduced the authority of *shari'a* courts. It also stopped Acehnese businesses from engaging in lucra-

tive barter trade with Malaysia, forcing them to send their exports from the port of Belawan in North Sumatra (Sulaiman 1997, 235–251; Sjamsuddin 1985, 63–76). *Uleebalang* remnants found government allies and lobbied for a restoration of the property that had been seized from them during the revolution (Sjamsuddin 1985, 48–52; Sulaiman 1997, 251–267). In short, the Darul Islam rebellion flowed partly from a conflict *within* Acehnese society as much as it pitted Acehnese against outsiders.

Yet the Darul Islam revolt was also based on an Indonesia-wide Islamic agenda. Its goals were mostly expressed in an Islamic idiom rather than a regionalist one. After the revolution, PUSA leaders and their allies not only had lost power in Aceh but also had seen their vision of an Islamic Indonesia frustrated by the dominance of secular nationalism. President Sukarno's compromise formula, the Pancasila, or the Five Principles, included the provision that Indonesia would be based on "belief in one God." The Aceh rebels' manifesto stated that they wanted an Islamic state and Islamic law because "belief in the One God is for us the very source of social life, and every single one of its directives must apply here on Indonesian soil" (Feith and Castles 1970, 212). Just as they did in the earlier struggles against the Dutch, the Acehnese Darul Islam texts divided antagonists between forces of belief and those of unbelief. As the important Darul Islam leader Hasan Saleh (1956, 21) put it, two forces were in conflict: "The first group is the ranks of the Muslims who are courageously resisting the *kafir*, while the second group is the ranks of the *kafir*, who hate the prospect of Allah's law being carried out in Indonesian society." Darul Islam texts explain why even enemy soldiers who performed Islamic rituals should be considered apostates if they fought God's law, and why killing them could be considered sound.

Affiliation with Darul Islam did not obliterate growing awareness of Acehnese difference. In 1955, for instance, Daud Beureueh declared Aceh to be a "federal state" of the NII and established a cabinet in defiance of the wishes of Kartosuwirjo (Sjamsuddin 1985, 237–238; Sulaiman 1997, 319). However, Darul Islam rejected parochialism. Hence, when Daud Beureueh, in April 1961, justified himself for holding out when most other rebel leaders had made peace, he did so by stressing that the Acehnese Darul Islam rebellion had been made "on the foundation of Islamic brotherhood" (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*) and in "solidarity with their brothers in struggle in West Java, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and elsewhere" (Ibrahimy 2001, 324–335).

In this light, although it was a revolt, Darul Islam was also a second high point of the conflation of Islamic, Acehnese, and Indonesian identities and goals. It was the last attempt of key Acehnese leaders and their followers to

realize their Islamic vision, not only for Aceh but for all of Indonesia. As they saw it, it was only through a government based on God's law that Acehnese and other Indonesians would fulfill their single destiny. This fusion of identities blurred the strategic vision of Acehnese leaders; they lacked a realistic assessment of what could be achieved in the wider Indonesian context. Isolation and defeat brought not only a new realism but also growing recognition that Aceh, Islam, and Indonesia were distinct fields for political action.

Institutionalization of Identity: Special Territory Status

The defeat of Darul Islam's ambitions to remake Indonesia on a more Islamic basis caused a narrowing of the horizons of Acehnese leaders. They had to swallow the bitter pill that their calls for Islamic solidarity had fallen on deaf ears, with no other region rising as forcibly in revolt. More important, the conflict ended by way of a compromise settlement that designated Aceh a special territory and recognized the "special" place the Acehnese occupied in the Indonesian republic. Morris (1983, 229) suggests this compromise meant that Acehnese leaders agreed to "regionalize" their demands. By the late 1950s, it was obvious that the archipelago-wide battle over *shari'a* and the philosophical basis of the state had been lost. Accepting special status held out the promise of implementing *shari'a* within Aceh and was preferable to complete surrender. The long-term implications were important. As Bertrand (2004, 168) puts it, "The settlement . . . institutionalized the Acehnese distinct identity by extending provincial status, the designation of 'special region,' and an informal recognition of Islamic law in Aceh."

A compromise settlement was worked out relatively quickly. The government first made some unilateral concessions, reinstating Aceh as a separate province in 1956, appointing Acehnese to lead the province's military and civilian bureaucracy, and empowering them to negotiate. Sjamaun Gaharu, Aceh's new military commander, and Ali Hasjmy, the governor, had been close to the Darul Islam leaders since the 1940s and were credible interlocutors. They replaced non-Acehnese troops with Acehnese, reestablished *shari'a* courts, and most importantly, proposed the special territory formula. These measures were approved by the central government in a 1959 decree that recognized Aceh's rights to "broad autonomy," especially in religious affairs; custom; and education.

The early negotiations to end the conflict were thus mostly between members of the Acehnese elite who knew each other well. In approaching their Darul Islam counterparts, Hasjmy and Gaharu stressed that they all shared personal responsibility to save their beloved Aceh from destruction. In response to these overtures, Darul Islam split. Non-*ulama* leaders, the first to be

attracted to compromise, were motivated by regionalist and personal interest (Sjamsuddin 1985, 11). They responded to the approaches by stressing not their previous Indonesia-wide Islamic goals but their loyalty to Aceh. As Hasan Saleh put it in a letter to his army counterpart, "Aceh, Aceh, for the sake of Aceh" (Sulaiman 1997, 357). Some of the leaders received lucrative positions in state-run enterprises, the bureaucracy, or the army. Daud Beureueh and a group around him initially held out, stressing their Islamic goals and their links with Kartosuwirjo, and declaring the blood of their former allies who made peace to be *halal* (literally, "permissible under Islamic law," meaning that they could be killed without fearing earthly or heavenly punishment) (Sulaiman 1997, 380, 412–413). Eventually even Daud saw the hopelessness of his position and said he would accept peace if Aceh alone was allowed to implement Islamic law. He came down from the hills in May 1962, once Aceh's military commander had signed a statement to that effect.

Peace marked a new stage in the Indonesianization of Aceh. Over the following decades Indonesia became no longer an abstract ideal but an increasingly intrusive presence in people's daily lives. Modern state institutions expanded, helping to spread Indonesian national cultural forms and political discourse. After the rise of Soeharto's military-based New Order regime in 1966, state instruments were turned ever more purposefully to nation building. In the phrase coined by Ali Moertopo, one of the regime's chief ideologues, the regime saw its role as "Indonesianizing Indonesians" (Hadiz and Bourchier 2003, 110) by inculcating in the population its "Pancasila ideology," which stressed national unity and subordinated individual and group interests to national ones. In the 1950s, Daud Beureueh had led a revolt against the Pancasila state; beginning in the late 1970s, students and other citizens in Aceh had to attend compulsory classes on Pancasila ideology. By this time, Aceh had become a fully Indonesian province.

This process generated grievances that are discussed in later chapters. What is important to emphasize here is that propagation of national symbols did not drown out emphasis on Aceh. Instead, nation building coincided with continued reaffirmation and celebration of Acehnese identity by Aceh's political elite. From the late 1950s on there was lively official and semi-official cultural production in the form of government-sponsored seminars and cultural festivals, artistic performances, research projects, books, and public commentary that cumulatively stressed Aceh's distinctive history and identity and its special place in the Indonesian nation.

Official celebration of Acehnese identity had two main forms. The first form, in line with processes elsewhere in Indonesia, was folklorization. One

early sign of this phenomenon was the *Pekan Kebudayaan Aceh* (week of Acehnese culture) organized in 1958 by the provincial government and military to celebrate the coming of peace. It included displays of dance, arts and crafts, a fashion show featuring traditional costumes, and consumption of special Acehnese dishes as well as discussions about Aceh's culture and history. Unlike the earlier PUSA cultural revival, the purpose of which was to find a path toward a purified Islamic future, the intent now was to recognize Acehnese specialness, but in a way that mounted no political threat to the state. In the wider Indonesian context this sort of celebration of local culture was not unusual. The Indonesian national project was premised from the start on multiculturalism, and state symbols such as the national slogan *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) emphasized ethnic diversity. Successive governments controlled the potentially threatening political implications by reifying regional cultures as "tradition," manifested in architecture, dance, food, and elements of *adat* (custom) such as wedding ceremonies. Ethnic diversity was celebrated at the level of "display" (Acciaioli 1985, 161; cited in Foulcher 1990, fn. 7) or as a "decorative" prop to the main narrative of modernization (Foulcher 1990, 302).

This process occurred in Aceh much as it occurred elsewhere in the country, albeit in a context of endless reiteration of Aceh's "specialness." In the 1970s, for example, government bodies gave much attention to inventorying Aceh's languages, wedding rituals, traditional crafts, and the like. Folklorization peaked under Governor Ibrahim Hasan (1986–1993), a worldly and educated technocrat who in 1987 won favor in Jakarta by being the first governor to ensure victory for Golkar, the government's party, in Aceh. During Ibrahim Hasan's reign, government buildings were built in a faux-traditional Acehnese style. Bureaucrats and their spouses began to wear "traditional" dress to official functions. Years later, when I asked him in an interview (Jakarta, April 20, 2004) to name the greatest achievement of his period in office, the governor volunteered precisely this aspect: "I exercised *adat* very well; I would always wear the *adat* shirt [at official functions and festivals]; if others did not, I would not attend."

The second form of official celebration of Acehnese identity was the production and popularization of a historical narrative centered around the myths of Aceh's precolonial greatness and its heroic resistance to the Dutch. As with the celebration of local culture, interest in regional history was not unique to Aceh, but it reached a pitch that outstripped the interest level in other provinces. Dozens and perhaps hundreds of books were published in Aceh on historical themes. They included everything from large coffee-table-style picture books on historical topics, reprints of old *hikayat* or other historical

documents, memoirs by former officials and independence fighters, and hagiographies of leading *ulama* or sultans. Other media used for historical propagation and debate included well-publicized and officially sponsored seminars on aspects of Aceh's history; for example, in 1978 a series of seminars on the arrival of Islam in Aceh was attended by high-ranking dignitaries and received blanket coverage in local newspapers. Articles, debates, and columns in newspapers regularly covered historical topics. Government officials mentioned Aceh's past glories in their speeches, and named streets, public buildings, and institutions after former sultans, war leaders, and *ulama*. The scholar-officials who populated Aceh's governing elite were key participants in this effort. Ali Hasjmy, for example, who became head of the local Ulama Council after retiring as governor in 1964, was a prolific contributor, writing books on everything from the *hikayat prang sabi* to Aceh's seventeenth-century female rulers.

The dominant tone of all this historical discourse was laudatory and nostalgic. A constant theme was the centrality of Aceh's contribution to the Indonesian independence struggle, with repeated tropes including the donation of the Dakota planes, fighting by Acehnese troops around Medan, and Aceh's status as seat of the emergency government. Whenever central government officials visited Aceh, their speeches inevitably included tributes to the heroic spirit of the Acehnese. There was also much interest in Aceh's precolonial history, in the glory of the sultanate and its international renown, and in Aceh's role in introducing Islam to the archipelago. Publications, public commentary, and popular belief on these topics included wild exaggerations; for example, the date of the conversion of the Acehnese to Islam was sometimes pushed back to far before textual or archaeological evidence would allow, as when former governor Ibrahim Hasan confidently told me in an interview (Jakarta, April 20, 2004) that the Acehnese were the first people after the Arabs to convert.

All of these efforts continued the glorification of Acehnese history and identity that had begun in the 1930s, but they were now linked to explicit political purposes. One aim was to weave Aceh's historical narrative into that of Indonesia. By stressing Aceh's vanguard role in resisting the Dutch, Acehnese officials could stress the indivisibility of Aceh from Indonesia. A second aim was to legitimate Aceh's "specialness" and thus help Acehnese officials to defend the autonomy they had won by using the special territory formula. Stressing Aceh's disproportionate contribution to independence served this purpose, as did promoting a depoliticized Islamic image based on Aceh's past grandeur and on the allegedly special piety of its inhabitants (Bowen 1989). In short, this institutionalization of ethnicity was a kind of "soft" identity formation in that it emphasized the compatibility of Aceh and Indonesia.

Although it was all-pervasive, the institutionalization of identity that occurred in Aceh was less *political* than that which has occurred in some settings. Brubaker (1998, 26–27), for instance, has noted that in the former Soviet Union minorities were institutionalized not only as ethnicities but as *nations;* there was "thoroughgoing state-sponsored codification and institutionalization of nationhood and nationality exclusively on a sub-state rather than a state-wide level." In the Soviet Union, and in Yugoslavia, the federal states were defined as at least theoretically sovereign (a factor that helps to explain the speed and suddenness of the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia). Indonesia was not as extreme as this. Indonesian state discourse did not position the Acehnese or any other ethnic group as a nationality; on the contrary, officials made great efforts to inculcate an overarching sense of Indonesian nationhood into the population and to explain that subordinate ethnic groups were constituent parts of that nation. This view was expressed linguistically in the distinction between *bangsa* and *suku bangsa* (literally, a constituent part of the nation, but also a term used to describe an ethnic group). State officials also expended much effort delegitimating subnational group identity as a basis of independent political action; for example, they proscribed media and other public discussion of issues deemed sensitive, such as those having to do with ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (*suku*, *agama*, *ras dan antar-golongan*, conventionally summed up in the acronym SARA). Other elements of the daily institutionalization of ethnicity that occurred in the Soviet and Yugoslav cases were also absent in Indonesia; for instance, local languages, including Acehnese, played little part in official life and were rarely taught in the education system except as a medium of instruction at the lowest levels.[5] Likewise, in place of the "elaborate codification of, and pervasive significance attached to, personal nationality" (Brubaker 1998, 29) in the Soviet Union, the New Order state did not even ask questions about ethnicity in the five-year census—so politically sensitive was this issue deemed to be.

Indonesia, including Aceh, was thus characterized by the *separation* of ethnicity from the field of substantive politics. Formal, historiographical, and folkloric celebrations of Aceh's uniqueness were in part a kind of *involution* that flowed from political powerlessness, and were widely understood as such. In theory, recognition of Aceh as a special territory envisaged devolution of much authority to local officials. In fact, the decree granting Aceh special territory status made it clear that *all* other national laws regulating the powers of the provinces would still apply to Aceh, thus rendering the decree virtually meaningless (Sulaiman 1997, 515–516). As we shall see, growing authoritarianism and centralization meant that special territory status had little more than symbolic power. Local

officials' celebration of Acehnese identity was compensation for their powerlessness where it really counted. It is little wonder, perhaps, that folklorization peaked under Governor Ibrahim Hasan, a man whom critics castigated for ruling during Aceh's most humiliating subjugation to the central government.

Even so, the superficiality of the official construction of Acehnese identity does not mean it was not important. Daily public discourse in Aceh routinely celebrated what made Aceh unique. A few simple formulae were repeated endlessly: Aceh was special, it deserved special treatment, it had a glorious past, it was more Islamic than other places, without it Indonesia would not have survived. As we shall see in later chapters, this banalization of Acehnese identity helped to set the scene for the rise of separatist nationalism. The gap between the rhetoric and reality of "specialness" stoked discontent while the official discourse provided a repertoire of references that could be recalibrated to justify independence; but the act of recalibration required dramatic reimagination of Aceh's historic identity.

Internationalization of Identity: Hasan di Tiro and the Origins of Separatism

As Aceh was being integrated into the Indonesian state, a "harder" identity formation was beginning on the other side of the world. Aceh's unlikely prophet of nationalism, Hasan di Tiro, was starting down a path that eventually led him to call for a complete break from Indonesia. Between the 1950s and early 1970s, while living in the United States, di Tiro developed ideas about Aceh's history and its place in the world that became central to the mass-based nationalism of later years. Many commentators, alienated by di Tiro's grandiose style and ethnic prejudices, have been inclined to dismiss him as a quixotic exile, isolated from his homeland and the social rhythms that animated it. In this section it is suggested that the experience of exile gave di Tiro's nationalist vision much of its power.

Di Tiro's background gave him impeccable leadership credentials in Aceh. His great-grandfather was the famous nineteenth-century *ulama* Tengku Cik di Tiro (who died in 1891), a figure whom anticolonial Acehnese venerated as the major leader of the Dutch war (Jakub 1960 [1943]). Di Tiro's grandfather and several great uncles, cousins, and other relatives were killed in some of the last major Dutch military operations in 1910 and 1911, a little more than a decade before his birth in 1925.[6] Di Tiro claims that his mother raised him on tales of his fighting-*ulama* heritage. In 1938 he became a student in the *madrasah* founded by Daud Beureueh in Blang Paseh, Pidie; and during the Japanese occupation he studied at a modern PUSA high school

in Bireuen and became a leader of the PUSA scouts organization. This background gave him personal connections to the main PUSA leaders, including Daud Beureueh himself. By most accounts, di Tiro was also something of a child prodigy. One former teacher described him as having had a "brilliant mind" and superb knowledge of Islam and foreign languages (Tgk M. Nur El Ibrahimy, interview with the author, Jakarta, January 27, 2003).

Di Tiro was in the thick of the Indonesian revolution as an activist in Pesindo (Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia, or Indonesian Socialist Youth), a main vehicle of the anti-*uleebalang* youth. His uncle, Tgk Umar di Tiro (who had been captured as a six-year-old in Tangse when the Dutch rounded up the remainder of his family), was an important leader of the social revolution in Pidie. His older brother, Zainal Abidin Tiro, was a confidant of Daud Beureueh. During the revolution, Hasan di Tiro showed early signs of enthusiasm for writing by authoring at least two booklets. One (Pemerintah R. I. Daerah Atjeh, n.d.), published anonymously, was a defense of Aceh's social revolution and the "eradication of the traitors to the homeland." The second, "The Aceh War 1873–1927," reveals both an interest in Acehnese history and a commitment to Indonesia: "Just as the region of Aceh is an inseparable part of the State of the Republic of Indonesia, so too its history is an inseparable part of the history of Indonesia, for the sake of our slogan, one nation, one language, one homeland!" (di Tiro 1948, 3). The book includes standard praise of Aceh's golden age and its people's fighting spirit, and it offers sketches of leaders of the war against the Dutch, including several from the di Tiro family. Although the topics are treated conventionally, they are the raw material for Hasan di Tiro's later nationalist reinterpretation of history.

The didactic spirit of "The Aceh War 1873–1927" is partly explained by its having been published when di Tiro moved to Yogyakarta, the capital of the republic during the revolution, to study at the new Islamic University of Indonesia. Few Acehnese were in Java at this time, which presumably inspired di Tiro to bring to a wider audience the interest in Aceh's history that had been burgeoning in Aceh for more than a decade. While in Yogyakarta, di Tiro also showed signs of having networking skills. He became close to senior politicians from Masyumi, the Islamic party, and to government officials. When the republic's emergency government was established in Aceh, di Tiro soon turned up and became a personal secretary to Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, staying with him in the former Dutch governor's residence (Ibrahim Abdullah, interview with author, Jakarta, July 20, 2004).

Di Tiro soon began a journey that was even more unusual for a young Indonesian at this time. He set out for New York, apparently stopping on the way

in the Philippines and in Holland, where he studied for at least a year. In New York he enrolled in a master's degree program at Fordham University. One of only a few Indonesians in the world's capital city, and for a while the only Acehnese, he worked as information officer at the Indonesian consulate to support himself through his studies. For a while he also made his living dubbing Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer films into Indonesian, earning for every feature the then princely sum of $200, enough to pay for a month's rent. Di Tiro was something of a dandy; he wore immaculate suits with carefully crumpled silk handkerchiefs spilling from his top pocket (Ibrahim Abdullah, interview with author, July 20, 2004). Some people remember him as gregarious and as mixing easily with Americans and other foreigners. According to the Indonesian embassy's press attaché in Washington at that time, Ganis Harsono, however, di Tiro was "subdued, religious, introverted, and sympathetic to Masyumi" (Harsono 1977, 114). Once the Ali Sastroamidjojo government (in which Masyumi was not represented) came to power, he became "even more reserved and withdrawn. He hardly talked or fraternized with his colleagues in the New York office and buried himself among the books and paper clippings of the Research Section of which he was head" (Harsono 1977, 115).

A year after Aceh went into revolt, di Tiro threw in his lot with Darul Islam. He announced his decision dramatically, in an open letter to Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo, copies of which were published in the Indonesian press (Bagian Dokumentasi n.d, 443–488), and in a letter to the *New York Times* (September 13, 1954). The letter to the prime minister accused him of dragging "Indonesia to the depths of political and economic collapse, impoverishment, division and Civil War." His "Communist-Fascist regime" was murdering his political opponents and "committing the most evil of political crimes which can be done in a state consisting of many ethnic groups." This crime was to set the various ethnic groups against one another, using the politics of "split and colonize" with those outside Java. Demanding that the prime minister stop military aggression, release political prisoners, and negotiate with rebel leaders, di Tiro threatened to open formal diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Indonesia (di Tiro's preferred name for Darul Islam) and foreign countries and the United Nations (UN). In the letter to the *New York Times* he tried to act on his threat. Describing himself as "Minister Plenipotentiary, Islamic Republic of Indonesia," di Tiro warned that the "Communists are now racing against time to take complete power in Indonesia." However, the Islamic Republic was waging "an increasingly successful war of resistance against the Communist-dominated Jakarta regime of Sastroamidjojo" and was "a de facto government with direct administrative control over sixteen million

of our people." Di Tiro also distributed bundles of documents to various UN delegations, except those of the communist countries.

Di Tiro's spectacular debut demonstrated considerable bravado. It must have taken a strong act of will for someone so young and lacking in nearby friends to break with his superiors so publicly. Although the letters generated a minor media sensation in Indonesia, they elicited no response from foreign governments or the UN. The Indonesian government cancelled di Tiro's passport, and he was detained by immigration officials at Ellis Island, awaiting deportation (see *New York Times*, September 17 and October 2, 1954). At this point, a campaign for di Tiro's release was organized by a group of American intellectuals, including several prominent anticommunists such as Norman Thomas, chairman of the Socialist Party; writer James T. Farrell; Roger Baldwin of the International League of the Rights of Man; Patrick Malin, head of the American Civil Liberties Union; and Arnold Beichman, a journalist and member of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, who later became one of di Tiro's closest American friends. Writing letters to the newspapers, holding press conferences, and lobbying politicians, this group brought di Tiro's case to the attention of some influential anticommunist congressmen, including the chairperson of the Senate Judicial Subcommittee on Internal Security, Republican William Jenner of Indiana. The subcommittee was then matching the better-known House Un-American Activities Committee in its red-hunting zeal. When it issued a subpoena for di Tiro to address it, his planned deportation was brought to a halt and he was freed from detention (*New York Times*, October 2, 1954; Arnold Beichman, telephone interview with author, August 14, 2004).

For several years di Tiro's immigration status was in limbo and he was again threatened with deportation. One especially important patron was Alfred Kohlberg, an anticommunist businessman and conspiracy theorist close to Senator Joe McCarthy. Perhaps influenced by di Tiro's plea that if his immigration status was cleared up he would "be able to travel to Indonesia and other Asian countries where I hope to be of service to the cause of anti-Communism and free Indonesia," Kohlberg lobbied Congress strongly on di Tiro's behalf, including by using his connections in the House Un-American Activities Committee.[7] Senator Jenner and Senator Herman Walker (a Republican from Idaho) sponsored di Tiro's application to stay in the United States. Eventually, in August 1958, Congress passed Private Law 85–671, which declared that for immigration law purposes di Tiro was to be considered to have entered the country legally, and granted him permanent residence.

The Cold War influence was crucial to di Tiro's behavior at this time. He stressed the anticommunism of Darul Islam in terms he knew would play

well in the United States. For example, he wrote to the *New York Times* that communists viewed Indonesia as "a rich prize" and as "stepping stones to the Philippines and Australia." At this time McCarthyism was peaking and U.S. policymakers were hostile to a leftward drift in Indonesia. Later in the decade, the U.S. government provided army rebels in Sumatra and Sulawesi with funds and munitions, and even authorized the U.S. military to fly bombing raids against Indonesian targets (Kahin and Kahin 1995). Little is known about how and to what extent Acehnese Darul Islam fighters received American support, but once di Tiro's liberty was secured, he did play a role in arranging arms purchases for his Acehnese comrades (Sjamsuddin 1985, 212, fn. 37), and it is likely that he secured some U.S. support in doing so.[8]

In subsequent years di Tiro remained close to prominent Cold Warriors in the United States.[9] They included key figures in the security establishment. Di Tiro became especially close to Edward Lansdale, the air force officer and CIA official who was an architect of American anti-insurgency strategy in the Philippines and, in the early 1960s, in South Vietnam. In a conversation many years later, when di Tiro's capacity to communicate was impaired by the effects of a stroke, di Tiro said he had spent a "long time" in Saigon working with Lansdale, who was "like a brother" to him (interview with author, Stockholm, June 4, 2004). Surviving correspondence between the two of them from the 1960s and the 1970s certainly demonstrates a warm personal tone. Di Tiro and his wife visited Lansdale's home and, after di Tiro declared Aceh's independence in 1976, he sent his mentor a series of letters from Aceh seeking his advice and support; Lansdale offered to do what he could to protect di Tiro's wife and son, who were left behind in New York.

Some archival evidence places di Tiro in South Vietnam from late 1958; there, apparently through the auspices of Alfred Kohlberg, he was connected to Bernard Yoh, who ran an anticommunist magazine in Saigon and is variously described as "an intelligence adviser to President Diem" (McCoy 1972, 162) and a "Catholic lay worker" who helped establish anticommunist militias in South Vietnam.[10] Kohlberg had already tried to introduce di Tiro to Allen Dulles of the CIA, and di Tiro already knew Lansdale in 1960, having presumably met him first in Vietnam. Although it is quite likely that di Tiro was a CIA asset of some sort around this time, there is no hard evidence of precisely what he was doing in Vietnam or the region. Some of his Acehnese supporters later claimed that he was also well-connected in the Philippines and there had shown them stockpiles of weapons available, or so he claimed, for use in Aceh.

Not much detail is known about di Tiro's activities between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s. Apart from his mysterious activities in Southeast Asia, he

also continued to lobby the UN and the U.S. government about Indonesian affairs whenever he could. (A statement he distributed to the UN when Sukarno visited in 1960 describes di Tiro as a representative of the "Permanent Delegation to the United Nations" of the "Federal Republic of Indonesia" [di Tiro 1960].) Di Tiro completed a doctorate in political science at Columbia University, writing a dissertation on Franklin Roosevelt as leader of the Democrat party (a topic that fit di Tiro's interest in great men). He married a Jewish woman of Belgian descent whom he met in 1960. If we are to believe di Tiro's own account, these years were marked by great business success. In the late 1960s he established a company, Doral International Ltd, and later claimed he had became fantastically rich:

> I had entrée to the highest business and governmental circles in many counties: the United States, Europe, Middle East, Africa and not least Southeast Asia, except "Indonesia" of course, which I avoided. I have close business relationships with top 50 US corporations in fields of petrochemicals, shipping, construction, aviation, manufacturing and food processing industries. My own company had join-venture [sic] agreements with many of them which I affected, and myself retain a status of consultant to some of them. As chairman of consortia of these corporations which included some of the world's largest, I had led many American corporate delegations to negotiate large scale business transactions in many countries in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia. [di Tiro 1984a, 6–7]

In the 1990s, in his modest flat on the outskirts of Stockholm, di Tiro would show visitors faded documents indicating Doral International's interests in such sectors as shipping, oil, and construction; rather tatty photocopies of photographs of himself with such world figures as Kurt Waldheim of the UN; letters from Thai princes; and the like. It is difficult to verify Hasan's wealth independently, and some Acehnese to whom I have spoken who visited him in the early 1970s were suspicious that he was putting on an elaborate show to convince them that he was a rich man. There is some evidence to support his claims; for example, one American friend recalls extravagantly generous gestures, including offers of large cash gifts. In New York, however, he lived in a comfortable middle-class area, with neighbors who were teachers, architects, and other midlevel professionals. Overall, it seems that di Tiro's business activities were mostly speculative and by the mid-1970s had yet to reap rich material rewards.

Another feature of di Tiro's early activities was that almost from the start his vision differed from that of his Darul Islam allies back in Aceh. Put simply, he stressed ethnicity more than religion. This difference was evident in 1954 and became more so in his 1958 book, *Democracy for Indonesia*. The core thesis of this book is that Indonesia was a multiethnic, indeed a multinational, state, and failing to recognize this would lead to disaster. Indonesian nationalism, of

the sort propounded by Sukarno, was "merely a make-believe nationalism"(di Tiro 1958, 71). It would not unite the country, because nationalism always failed in large states. Indonesia was "a large state made up of the family of Indonesian nations, none of which can forget themselves." One *suku bangsa* (ethnic group) celebrating itself—as the Javanese had been doing by glorifying Gadjah Mada, the famous leader of the fourteenth-century Majapahit empire—would only stimulate the nationalism of the other *suku bangsa* (di Tiro 1958, 67). There was no single Indonesian *bangsa*, or nation. *Indonesia* was only a "term to indicate a place on the map of the earth." Instead, there were Indonesian *nations* (di Tiro 1958, 82), each created by God:

> Thousands of years before our archipelago was given the name Indonesia, our ancestors already lived in and ruled these islands. The blood that flows in our veins, the languages that come off our tongues, our customs and traditions, none of them are our own creations but heirlooms we have received from them, products of civilizations that have been tended for thousands of years, which were inherited by our ancestors from their ancestors, and passed on by our ancestors to us for us to pass down to our own grandchildren. [di Tiro 1958, 83]

Failing to recognize this diversity had led to de facto Javanese dominance (di Tiro 1958, 86–87). Di Tiro's description of this dominance was not yet marked by the ethnic hostility of his later writing; instead, he viewed this dominance as an outcome of majority rule in a multiethnic state (di Tiro 1958, 97–98). Although he depicted Islam rather than nationalism as the only true foundation for Indonesian unity (see the quotation that opens this chapter), when it came to solutions, Islam hardly figured. Instead, the key was a new constitutional order that would divide the country into ethnically based states and include robust federalism and a strong upper house, a system not unlike the one he was studying in U.S. political science courses.

Di Tiro's developing political vision was stamped by the experience of exile. He was not unique among regional rebels in the 1950s in advocating federalism, nor even in attacking Javanese dominance. What marks him is his casual dismissal of Indonesian nationalism as an artificial contrivance. It is hard to imagine a person remaining in Aceh with such an attitude. After Darul Islam, Aceh was becoming *more* Indonesian, not less, and Indonesian nationalist discourse was becoming a framework for expressing both support for and opposition to the government. Di Tiro was isolated from all that. Unlike many nationalist exiles, he developed his ideas in isolation from his compatriots. Beginning in the late 1950s he occasionally visited Southeast Asia and met with Darul Islam contacts there, and he corresponded with leaders in Aceh and had one secret visit to Aceh; but he had virtually no daily interaction

with other Indonesians in New York. This personal isolation, perhaps unique among Acehnese, helped him snap altogether the link between Indonesian and Acehnese identities that was now almost half a century old.

Di Tiro's later writings, from the 1960s and early 1970s, focused on Aceh's history. His interest in Aceh's history was not unique, nor did it begin when he went overseas. But while his colleagues back in Aceh were intent on writing Aceh's history into the narrative of Indonesian nationalism (as had been di Tiro's own concern in 1948), his more lonely research in Holland and the United States took him in a different direction. His main sources were nineteenth-century Western writings on Aceh's resistance to the Dutch. He was particularly impressed by reports from American and British newspapers. As he later put it, "The comments of *The London Times* and *The Morning Post* on the subject are worth the Tablets of Mt. Sinai for us" (di Tiro 1984a, 49). Some nineteenth-century writers not only expressed surprised admiration for the tenacity of the Acehnese; they also depicted the war through a national prism, which was very different from the way in which Acehnese at the time had understood it. Even Snouck Hurgronje (1906, vol. 1, 173) had described Acehnese resistance to the Dutch as "from the very first a national war." This European understanding of Aceh's past was to be the foundation of di Tiro's future political vision. As he was already putting it in 1973, "History, especially great history, such as ours, is a national asset, a treasure house, and building blocks to build the future on" (di Tiro 1973, 17).

Hasan di Tiro's international experiences shaped his nationalist vision. His personal isolation helped him to separate Aceh from the Indonesian context in which it was already embedded. In the United States he became connected to anticommunist Cold War networks that gave him a taste of international power politics and enabled him to see Aceh's problems in a wider global context. Mixing with people who saw Southeast Asian postcolonial states as bit players that could be broken asunder at will must have left on him an indelible impression about the malleability of national borders. His immersion in colonial-era texts helped him to reimagine Aceh's struggle in nationalist terms. The next chapter introduces another aspect of di Tiro's overseas experience that formed his nationalist vision: the influence of the doctrines of self-determination and state sovereignty that he learned in the shadow of the United Nations.

Conclusion: Islam, Indonesia, and Aceh

Although it may be tempting to see in history a resilient and self-conscious Acehnese identity, most surviving sources tell us there was no such consciousness before the twentieth century. There was a body of oral and written lit-

erature, including origin myths and epics glorifying past rulers and dynasties, but there were no more than occasional hints that these were linked to a sense that the Acehnese represented a distinct people. There is certainly no evidence that such an identity was a basis for military or political mobilization. Instead, people saw themselves vertically located in relation to social hierarchy, and horizontally bound to their fellow believers through the world religion of Islam. It was modernity, in the guise of colonialism, that brought into being a new form of consciousness whereby people imagined themselves also connected as part of a distinctive group, or *bangsa*, of people from which political sovereignty flowed.

The colonial period saw the appearance of a new Acehnese identity, but almost from the start it was part of a wider Indonesian one. The surge of interest in Aceh's history from the 1930s reflected new Acehnese self-consciousness; in equal measure it was part of an attempt to find deep historical roots for Indonesian nationhood. Nationalists throughout the archipelago were "excavating" the history of past civilizations in order to generate authenticity for the putative nation (Reid 1979b). As part of this process, the historical revivalism of the 1930s and 1940s was simultaneously constructing both Acehnese and Indonesian identities. This construction was a single endeavor, using the same historical materials and driven by the same modern imperatives. Thus Hasan di Tiro's 1948 book on Aceh's history explicitly aimed to enlighten his fellow Indonesians about Aceh's contribution as "last fortress of freedom of the Indonesian nation" (di Tiro 1948, 4).

It was not inevitable that Acehnese identity would become a basis for mobilization against Indonesia. Instead, Acehnese rebelliousness under Indonesian rule was path dependent; it can be traced to particular historical events and conflicts of interest, notably the autonomy that the modernist *ulama* enjoyed during the revolution, and the dramatic loss of it immediately thereafter. Had certain critical moments played out differently (for instance, had Indonesia made the transition to independence with a more Islamic national government), it is possible that we would not have seen the sequence of events that eventually produced separatist nationalism.

Moreover, the emergence of Acehnese identity as a basis for oppositional mobilization required more than disillusionment with Indonesia; it also required the defeat of the Islamic aspirations of Aceh's leaders. Indeed, one implication of this chapter is that it was Islam that *delayed* separate nationalist sentiment in Aceh.[11] This interpretation breaks with conventional wisdom, because contention about the role of Islam prompted the first revolt in Aceh and thus drove the later dynamic of rebellion. Yet for Aceh's leaders, including

the rebel *ulama* of the 1950s, Islam was also the main force that bound Aceh to the rest of Indonesia. Their belief in the unity, universality, and equality of the *umma* (Islamic community) cemented them to their coreligionists elsewhere in the archipelago. When Acehnese leaders filled the empty concept of *Indonesia*, they did so with Islam, and they believed that all of Indonesia, not just Aceh, should be founded on Islamic principles. Revolt was a sign of alienation, but it was also an expression of continuing commitment to the fusion of Acehnese, Indonesian, and Islamic identities. The defeat of the revolt broke that fusion and cleared the ground for separatist nationalism. The special territory compromise prompted territorialization of identity; di Tiro's international experiences provided him with a vocabulary to reimagine Aceh's struggle as that of a nation struggling for self-realization.

3

Birth of Nationalism

Aceh Merdeka, 1976–1982

> Our first duty is to awaken our people to their proper destiny. To counter Javanese "indonesian" [sic] propaganda that had gone hitherto unopposed by us, that had misled our people, and made so many of them gone mad, suffering acute identity crisis and national amnesia, a situation that had brought our nation to the brink of disaster.
>
> *di Tiro 1984a, 70*

Many explanations of the origins of separatist unrest in Aceh in the 1970s begin, as do analyses of many other secessionist or ethnic conflicts, with what might be called a theory of *objective grievances*. In this view, ill-treatment by a state, or by an ethnic majority, is the starting point of violence. In Aceh's case, most accounts emphasize three sets of factors: the political centralization of the New Order regime; unfair exploitation of Aceh's natural resources; and later, military violence.

This chapter provides an alternative account of the origins of the insurgency of the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, or GAM). It does not turn away from grievances but tries to go beyond them. It focuses instead on GAM's nationalist ideas, on the people who created and promoted them, and on the context that shaped them. This approach is adopted partly because the grievances have been well analyzed in other studies, and partly because grievances by themselves are insufficient to explain rebellion.

To illustrate the problem, consider the following notes taken during a visit to Malaysia in early 2004 when many Acehnese were in that country fleeing

martial law. At that time I asked many Acehnese refugees why they supported GAM. I sometimes prefaced the question by observing that it seemed GAM's presence had resulted in much suffering for the Acehnese population by inviting a military response. One middle-aged man (Mahmud, a pseudonym) from a village in North Aceh responded thus (as reconstructed from my notes[1]):

> In about 1974, Kostrad [Army Strategic Reserve] soldiers were sent to our village near Arun. This was before Aceh Merdeka was formed. They came to carry out *ABRI masuk desa* ["The armed forces enter the village," a military civic construction program]. But they forced *us*, the village people, to build the road. They just relaxed and watched us work, as though we were wage laborers. If we stopped to rest, they called us lazy. That is how they treated us. So it was *they* who created GAM, not us. And then, after the Acehnese had been abused in this fashion, Hasan di Tiro came home to Aceh. I heard about his proclamation of independence in about 1977, not long after it was made. I could see that Hasan di Tiro had clear spectacles for understanding the Aceh problem. We could accept his views immediately, because we ourselves had seen them treat us like slaves. They forced us to build that road ourselves, and then they got the credit for it. There is still a sign on that road in our village: "This road is AMD (*ABRI Masuk Desa*)."

Mahmud also recalled that when villagers met soldiers walking along a path in their fields, they invariably had to stand aside and wait in the drain. He said this reminded him of the "history of our ancestors." In Dutch times, when the colonial soldiers passed, the people had to stand aside and bow. Finally, after elaborating on more recent military abuses in his area, he reiterated his sympathy for GAM: "GAM people are not tyrannical, and they aim to free us from the tyranny of Indonesia."

At first sight this anecdote seems to confirm the grievance explanation. Mahmud felt aggrieved by the behavior of the soldiers. He also used his story to argue that unjust behavior by authorities had given rise to separatism. It was common for Acehnese to talk this way when explaining why they supported independence; most scholarly analyses extrapolate from such positions.

Viewed more closely, Mahmud's story illustrates the difficulty of taking grievances at face value. His reference to Aceh's past hints that his anecdote is not simply a recollection of nationalist awakening but rather an illustration of a well-developed nationalist framework. The parallel he draws between Indonesian and colonial rule is typical of GAM discourse, as is the comparison between Indonesian and Dutch troops. It is possible that the historical comparison was a later embellishment, a reinterpretation of Mahmud's early life in the light of the nationalist ideas he later learned.

Equally important is that in an Indonesian context the behavior of the troops recalled by Mahmud was unremarkable. ABRI Masuk Desa was a nationwide

program. No doubt many thousands of people in other provinces would be able to recall indolent troops in their villages taking the credit for hard work done by others, but they did not rebel. This point may seem trivial but it could be made for all the other grievances usually highlighted as causes of rebellion in Aceh.

In explaining rebellion, we need to move beyond grievance-based approaches. In Aceh, as in other sites of separatist rebellion, grievances were important, but equally important was a collective action frame justifying revolt, and the presence of nationalist political entrepreneurs willing to explain and promote that frame. In the 1970s there would have been no rebellion if not for the nationalist actors of Aceh Merdeka who seized upon inchoate grievances in society, reinterpreted them, and wove them into a comprehensive nationalist ideology that both explained them and promised relief in the form of national liberation.

This chapter therefore focuses on Hasan di Tiro and the small group of people around him who established Aceh Merdeka in the 1970s. It explains their background and activities, but it also devotes much attention to the contours of their nationalist ideology and their methods of promoting it to the population. In doing so, the chapter argues that nationalist movements are similar to all political movements: to succeed they must engage in a constant process of *persuasion*. The story told in this chapter is largely a story of a sustained effort to persuade an Acehnese audience of the merits of secessionist ideas. This effort involved justifying Acehnese nationhood in terms of history and international law, and convincing the audience that they were henceforth *only* Acehnese and not also Indonesians. Many features of nationalist ideology and behavior become explicable in this light.

Aceh in the Early New Order

The Darul Islam revolt had been laid to rest in the early 1960s by military action and compromise. Not long after Daud Beureueh and his last supporters came down from the hills in 1962, the tide of national politics suddenly seemed to turn in favor of those who argued for Aceh's special rights. In Jakarta, an attempted leftist coup in 1965 quickly collapsed and the army moved to destroy the communist party and depose President Sukarno. Assisting the army was an anticommunist coalition in which Muslim groups were prominent. In Aceh, groups that earlier were affiliated with Darul Islam were among the first in the country to move against the left. The Majelis Ulama (Ulama Council) issued a *fatwa* forbidding communism, and Islamic youth groups killed thousands of leftists.

After the destruction of the left, Muslim leaders hoped to make political gains. In Jakarta there were renewed attempts to attain constitutional recognition for Islamic law and revive Masyumi, the modernist party, which had been banned by Sukarno in 1960. In Aceh, local leaders wanted to implement special territory arrangements rapidly and enforce the province's Islamic character. In 1968 the provincial legislature passed a regulation known as "Realization of Elements of Islamic Law" and took steps to integrate state and religious education (Boland 1971, 182–185; Morris 1983, 269–282). It also called for 20 percent of revenues from the province's oil industry to be returned to the provincial administration (Morris 1983, 263).

In the late 1960s, however, the broader political climate did not support either recognition of Islamic aspirations or meaningful autonomy for any region. Soeharto's New Order was military dominated and hostile to independent civilian political forces, of which Muslim groups were the most important after the destruction of the left. Soeharto himself vetoed the revival of Masyumi, and security officials intimidated supporters of the remaining Muslim parties, which led in 1973 to the forced fusion of those parties into the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP, United Development Party), an organization that was crippled by internal conflicts and controlled by government stooges. In Aceh too, followers of the Islamic parties suffered from both petty and serious harassment.

The new government was also highly centralized. It gave local legislatures and administrators little scope to design policies reflecting local circumstances, and it became obsessed with the idea of national unity, to the point of stressing uniformity. Unsurprisingly, it never approved Aceh's moves to implement *shari'a* and integrate the education system (Morris 1983, 276–281). By 1969 some Acehnese intellectuals were already expressing disillusionment with special territory status (Morris 1983, 282). Despite continued reiteration by local officials of Aceh's special character, the province came to be administered in much the same way as any other province. As the New Order's last governor, Syamsuddin Mahmud, acknowledged later, "Special Territory status was only a slogan meant to comfort; it had no content" (*Kompas*, February 23, 1999).

Even so, there was no direct rule from the center. When compared to other parts of the country, Aceh fared relatively well. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, all regional heads, including the governor, the eight *bupati* (district heads), and more than one hundred *camat*, or subdistrict heads, were "native sons" (Morris 1983, 255–256). This situation changed little during the Soeharto period, in contrast to the situations in other provinces, where outsiders, including Javanese, often occupied senior posts. In Aceh, a new breed of

Acehnese civilian technocrats dominated administration, in cooperation with army officers. Their "claim to leadership was based on secular higher education, gained, for the initial few, at universities in Java followed by advanced study in the United States or Europe, and for the succeeding generation, at Syiah Kuala University in Aceh" (Morris 1983, 256). Many of the university's leading intellectuals served in key government posts. Madjid Ibrahim was a university professor who became head of the Aceh Development Board in the early 1970s and governor in 1978. He was succeeded by the former rector of Syiah Kuala, Ibrahim Hasan (1986–1993), and then by Syamsuddin Mahmud (1993–2000), formerly dean of the economics faculty. The technocrats and other officials still emphasized Aceh's specialness, its cultural and historical uniqueness, and the contribution it had made to the birth of the Indonesian nation. They also, however, defined Aceh in terms of marginality and backwardness, and emphasized accelerated economic development (Schlegel 1979, Morris 1983). In this respect they reproduced the developmentalist ideology of the military-technocratic alliance at the national level, but they also saw Aceh as backward in relation to the rest of the country.

At the start of the 1970s Aceh had one of the most rural populations in Indonesia. In 1971, according to the census of that year, Aceh was 8.4 percent urban and 91.6 rural (compared to the national figures of 17.3 and 82.7 percent, respectively). Of the two hundred thousand or so (out of more than two million) of the province's population who lived in urban areas, 80 percent were in small district towns (*Aceh Dalam Angka* 1972). Its gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was a little below the national average. Yet as Morris (1983, 254) notes, it was a moot point whether Aceh was significantly more backward than most of the rest of the country: "Acehnese did not suffer the extreme poverty of their compatriots in Java and East Indonesia." Poverty rates were comparatively low, and infant mortality and life expectancy were better than the national average (Hill and Weidemann 1989). The weakness of Aceh's infrastructure and of the modern sector were what really alarmed the technocrats. Much of Aceh's transportation infrastructure had been destroyed or had deteriorated during the preceding years of conflict and stagnation, impeding transport of agricultural products to ports, and making communication with other provinces difficult.[2]

The technocrats also viewed Acehnese backwardness as a deep cultural or mental problem. Stressing poor education levels, and wanting to improve literacy and technical skills, they decried—in the words of the first New Order governor, Muzakkir Walad—the "closed mentality of the population." As Governor Muzakkir put it, "In Acehnese society the ties of customary rule grip

too tightly, so that they give rise to a kind of fanaticism, manifested in a tendency to adopt extreme attitudes toward all matters" (*Kompas*, May 12, 1970). In the governor's view, Aceh would benefit from communication and social contact with outsiders in order to prompt change from "a closed mental attitude to an open one" (*Kompas*, September 4, 1972). In the broader context, this was not unusual; the modernizing intellectuals who everywhere were allied with the New Order saw it as their duty to overcome "irrational" thinking, which they believed dominated Indonesia's agrarian society. In Aceh, however, repudiation of "backwardness" could readily be interpreted as assaulting local tradition.

In the 1970s, the full range of development programs carried out throughout Indonesia also occurred in Aceh. The barrage of development milestones included new irrigation facilities, roads, bridges, and sugar mills (the Tjot Girek factory, opened in 1970, was the largest outside of Java); the large Lhok Nga cement factory; the Malhayati Port facility, opened in 1977; and so on. It was natural resources, especially gas, that later came to preoccupy historians of Acehnese discontent. There had been an oil industry in Aceh since the colonial period. Massive reserves of liquefied natural gas (LNG) were found in the Arun fields of North Aceh by Mobil Oil Indonesia in 1971; in 1974 it was announced that the fields were the largest in Asia. The first exports from Arun began in October 1977. By the late 1980s, 30 percent of Indonesia's oil and gas exports were coming from Aceh (Kell 1995, 14), and a large industrial zone, including two fertilizer factories, was established in the surrounding area. Aceh was catapulted from the margins of Indonesian economic life to the center and became a major contributor to government revenue.

The rapid development of the industry gave rise to social tensions. These tensions have been explored in detail by other authors (Kell 1995, Ross 2005, McCarthy 2007, Aspinall 2007a), so the following account can be brief. The first complaint was that relatively little of the wealth generated went back to the province. By the end of the New Order, this fact had become a deep and running sore; it was a common complaint that only a tiny percentage of revenues generated by the oil and gas industry went to the provincial government.

A second problem was that the LNG project became an enclave development that little benefited the people in surrounding communities. By 1998, 65 percent of Aceh's GDP came from oil and gas, yet the sector accounted for only one third of 1 percent of employment (Ross 2002, 30–31). Apart from the oil and gas boom, Aceh had "not experienced the rapid structural changes that have occurred elsewhere in Indonesia" (Kell 1995, 22). Manufacturing was stunted, and as late as 1984, once mining was excluded, agriculture still made

up almost half of the regional GDP (Dawood and Sjafrizal 1989, 112). Of the employment the industry did generate, relatively little went to locals. Most managers and skilled technicians came from outside the province, which fed resentment among Acehnese, who were also offended by the urban lifestyle the migrants brought with them. Media reports from the 1970s to the 1990s frequently featured complaints about the low numbers of locals employed by the big companies, and there were sometimes arson attacks on the nightclubs and brothels clustered around the industrial zone.

A third problem was that local communities suffered ill-effects from the projects. Their land was compulsorily acquired from them, usually with inadequate compensation, and environmental pollution harmed local agriculture, fisheries, and human health. McCarthy (2007) argues that the projects thus violated a local "moral economy" in which communities were expected to share the benefits of local land use. Such localized impacts never featured so prominently in separatist literature, but there is evidence that they generated local resistance. For example, in November 1974 a telegram sent by the U.S. consulate in Medan reported that Mobil Oil had encountered "some local Acehnese opposition" and that, according to a leak from a disgruntled Mobil staff member, a "soil testing team requested and received emergency evacuation by helicopter from work site after unruly crowds blocked all five roads from work site."[3]

Most analysts have stressed these background factors and attendant grievances in explaining the Aceh conflict. John Bowen (a respected anthropologist who is widely admired for his research on Islam in the highlands of Central Aceh) even wrote in one piece that the Western media's view of the Aceh conflict as being about ethnicity was a stereotype, and that instead the conflict "has been about the control over the region's vast oil and gas resources" (Bowen 2002, 340).

In my view, although the grievances were important, they do not provide a complete explanation. Indeed, what might be stressed here is the *normalcy* of Aceh's circumstances in the context of Indonesia rather than the special nature of its grievances. Extensive natural resource industries in three other provinces (Riau, East Kalimantan, and Irian Jaya) also contributed disproportionately to national revenues; only in Irian Jaya was there another separatist insurgency, and there the roots of rebellion were to be found much more in that province's distinct history and in the manner by which it was incorporated into Indonesia rather than in its natural resource industry (Chauvel 2004). Forced expropriation of land without adequate compensation occurred throughout Indonesia wherever there were large development projects, often

prompting local resistance. Suppression of civilian dissent and political Islam was also ubiquitous.

What made Aceh different was that it had recently been the site of rebellion. A network of former combatants were ready to take up arms once more. The settlement of the Darul Islam revolt had produced a compromise settlement that had raised expectations that Aceh would be treated sympathetically, and then let them down. It had also turned Acehnese society in on itself, creating an all-pervasive discourse that Aceh was special, and a tendency for local actors to interpret problems that were mundane in the national context as embodying uniquely malicious maltreatment. Even so, the jump from grievance to separatist rebellion was not automatic. For that the Acehnese needed an agent who could shape the raw material of their grievances into an explanation for their hurt and a means for its remedy.

Toward Revolt

Many nationalist movements have been founded by individuals who have possessed great personal force. In few cases has the founder been as singlehandedly influential as Hasan di Tiro. Although there had already been a broad gamut of dissatisfactions with Jakarta in Aceh, before 1976 those dissatisfactions gave rise only to the usual pattern of sporadic Islamic protest and agitation. Above all it was Hasan di Tiro who molded these dissatisfactions into a coherent nationalist vision. The ideas he developed about Acehnese history and identity were new; some of his early followers recall them as revelatory. Later, leaders of GAM looked back to the early 1970s and said how "fortunate" they were to have had such a leader. Without him, I have often heard, the Acehnese might have lost their sense of separate identity and culture.

Such assessments match the role that di Tiro assigned himself. He has written one major work, which records his seventeen months in Aceh's mountains between October 1976 and March 1979: his "Unfinished Diary," *The Price of Freedom*, which was written in English and first published in Malaysia in 1981. Its 350 pages represent a valuable, although far from reliable, record of the effort to establish a guerrilla movement in Aceh's mountains, and offer many insights into di Tiro's nationalist vision. They also reveal the workings of an extraordinary ego. The first paragraph provides the flavor:

> I have finally decided to do what I have believed all along to be my destiny in life: to lead my people and my country to freedom. That is my life mission. I will be a failure if I failed to do so. Acquisition of power and wealth has never been my goal in life because I have both in my country. Nor do I want to do it because I look to it as an achievement or a career: I have to do it as a duty, an obligation put on my shoulders

> by my ancestors on account of future generations; a duty received and a debt that must be paid because of the past and the future of my people. I have been brought up by my family to think so, and I have seen confirmation and expectation from my people to be so. For I have been born to the Tengku di Tiro family of Acheh, Sumatra, the family that had ruled my country and had provided leadership to it through war and peace for so many generations and for centuries in the long history of our country. [di Tiro 1984a, 2]

The book is full of grandiose language. Di Tiro's recollections of his childhood, for instance, contain references to displays of loyalty by ordinary folk. He revels in the loyalty shown to him by his followers, explaining that it was based on blood lineage: "All of them identify with the family. They are like my children, and I am like their father. It has been so for generations" (di Tiro 1984a, 57). His travels across Acehnese territory prompted reveries about sacrifices made by his ancestors, especially Tengku Cik di Tiro and his descendants. The national holidays he proclaims commemorate mostly fights with the Dutch in which his ancestors were killed. Each holiday becomes an occasion for a speech about the sacrifices of the di Tiro family and about the need to uphold their sacred duty.

Hasan di Tiro's emphasis on his ancestry is partly utilitarian. By presenting himself as a descendant of the "successive rulers and supreme commanders of the Sovereign State of Acheh Sumatra" (Tiro 1984a, 25), he is able to claim that he is the "41st Ruler of Acheh." As we shall see, his claim is linked to a wider set of arguments about Aceh's sovereign status. At this point, however, it is worth noting the audacious reinvention contained in it. Tengku Cik di Tiro and his family did have close to legendary status in Aceh, but they were famous and revered as *ulama*, not as hereditary rulers.

Di Tiro's interpretation partly reflects his overseas experience. As Siegel (2000, 360) has argued, di Tiro's diary suggests that he "does not inhabit the English language. He borrows from English a style of discourse that nowadays seems exaggerated and gives him self-importance. . . . One has the impression that Hasan Mohammed di Tiro got his ideas not only from 'the people,' as he claims, but from forms of expression he learned abroad." Indeed, while claiming a hereditary right to rule, di Tiro also stresses his more worldly and international connections. He frequently interrupts his narrative of forest life to recollect the luxurious life he led abroad and to remind readers of his business success and glittering connections there. He thought nothing, he tells his readers, of meeting with Thai princes and Arab monarchs, and of flying across the United States in a private jet.

Many of the ways he talks about himself are drawn from the Western canon. In one widely cited passage in *The Price of Freedom*, di Tiro recounts stumbling

upon Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, with its repeated refrain, "You are going your way to greatness," in a New York bookstore. He writes, "I was seized, as it were, by these strong words, forgetting where I was. It was like lightning that swept away all my doubts and clearing my path." From that time on he "never parted company with Nietzsche" (di Tiro 1984a, 6). He compares crossing the Malacca Strait to found Aceh Merdeka with Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, with Napoleon's landings in France, and with Fidel Castro's landing in Cuba (di Tiro 1984a, 13). Even his depiction of himself as beloved hereditary ruler has an air of cultural borrowing about it; his ancestors become monarchs with a distinctly European flavor who ruled Aceh for centuries, and his family acquires a "coat of arms" (di Tiro 1984a, 42) and "estates" (di Tiro 1984a, 181). (To make this claim was itself an extraordinary transition for someone who had been in the "antifeudal" camp of PUSA in the 1940s.) The same might be said about the way in which di Tiro talks of Aceh as a "holy land" (di Tiro 1984a, 69)—a novel form of phrasing in Acehnese tradition.

The act of will required to establish Aceh Merdeka and make the ideological break with the hitherto dominant tradition of Islamic resistance was thus partly a product of di Tiro's isolation from political and social developments in Aceh. As has already been noted, from the 1950s to the early 1970s he had few connections with other Acehnese. He was still international point man for the old Acehnese Darul Islam networks, but face-to-face meetings must have been rare. His recollections of childhood, his rediscovery of Acehnese history, his reformulation of Acehnese resistance goals—none of these occurred while he was immersed in the daily rhythm of Acehnese society. All were influenced by the longings and nostalgia of exile.

In his *Unfinished Diary*, di Tiro describes his secret arrival by boat on October 30, 1976, as "my first night in my homeland after being in exile for 25 years in the United States" (di Tiro 1984a, 15). No doubt his intent is to add to the drama of the homecoming. In fact, this was not the first time that di Tiro had visited Aceh since he left in 1950 to go to the United States. He had made one clandestine visit in the late 1950s or early 1960s. He had also been back more recently. He had made at least one visit to Aceh in the mid-1970s, prior to October 1976. The precise dates and number of visits are disputed. The only one for which there is solid contemporary evidence took place on the eve of the revolt. On September 10, 1976, the Medan newspaper, *Waspada*, reported the return of a "former prominent leader of Acehnese society who left to go to the United States twenty-six years ago and is now the president of Doral International Ltd. in New York." Di Tiro had landed at Medan's Polonia airport on his way to Aceh from Jakarta, shown off his new Indonesian passport, and told a journalist

he wished to live in Indonesia and was investigating the possibility of cooperation between his company and the government in Aceh and North Sumatra.

According to Isa Sulaiman (2000, 18), di Tiro was given a visa not long after Syarif Thayeb, a high-ranking Acehnese official from an *uleebalang* family, became Indonesian ambassador to the United States in 1974. Most likely this gesture was simply part of a wider policy of rehabilitating exiled anti-communist and anti-Sukarno figures. In any case, di Tiro came back to Aceh not as a fugitive in the night but as a returning favorite son. It was unusual at that time for any Acehnese person to be educated in the West, let alone to be successful in business there. Di Tiro was also well known as former overseas representative of Daud Beureueh. His family name bore great weight. So when di Tiro returned, he was greeted enthusiastically by members of the Acehnese elite in both Aceh and Medan (Sulaiman 2000, 18–19). Individuals who met him when his motorcade arrived in his home district, Tiro, recall a triumphal homecoming, with di Tiro riding in a car lent by the governor and accompanied by a police escort.

Some of di Tiro's old friends suggested that he return to Aceh for good and take up an academic or government post. Ibrahim Abdullah, for example, who also had studied in New York and by now was running the "free port" at Sabang, told di Tiro that if he did so he might eventually become governor (Ibrahim Abdullah, interview with author, Jakarta, July 20, 2004). Di Tiro gained audiences with prominent leaders, including the governor, Muzakkir Walad. The meeting with the governor later became a source of controversy. Sulaiman (2000, 19) cites the governor as saying di Tiro requested that his company, Doral, should replace Bechtel as a contractor for the state oil company, Pertamina, in the new gas fields. Versions of the story have been confirmed by other witnesses. Subsequently, di Tiro's enemies made much of this meeting, saying it indicated that from the start he was motivated only by personal ambition and desire for wealth. A more favorable interpretation is that the promise to invest was a ruse to get permission to reenter the territory.[4]

Whatever the truth of these claims, it is important not to exaggerate the significance of this alleged meeting in the establishment of Aceh Merdeka. The historical record suggests that di Tiro had for some years already been considering reviving the struggle against Jakarta. As shown in the preceding chapter, since the late 1950s his views about Aceh's history and its relations with Indonesia had evolved extensively. More important, Aceh Merdeka was not a single-handed enterprise. Di Tiro returned to Aceh when some former Darul Islam supporters were already considering reviving their resistance to Jakarta. He relied on these circles to establish his new movement.

Some accounts suggest that plotting for renewed revolt had begun as early as 1970. According to one version, Hasan di Tiro's older brother, Zainal Abidin Tiro, went to the United States (Saleh 1992, 372); another is that Daud Beureueh himself visited in mid-1971 (Sulaiman 2000, 18). Despite confusion over the details, it is clear that Daud Beureueh was involved and at least passively endorsed plans for renewed revolt. In the recollection of one aged witness, who recalled a meeting in the mosque in Daud's hometown of Beureunuen after di Tiro's return, Daud conferred on the younger man the "duty" to lead the struggle to "uphold the Islamic state in Aceh" (Abu Mansur, interview with author, Beureunuen, November 29, 2000).

Such endorsement was crucial for di Tiro as he embarked on a feverish round of meetings. Former Darul Islam acquaintances and others, upon hearing rumors that revolt was afoot, came to hear his plans. Not all were impressed. Former Darul Islam military commander Hasan Saleh, who had been one of the first to break with Daud Beureueh in the 1950s and wished to stop the new conspiracy, tracked the younger man down in Pidie. He was disturbed by the fanaticism of di Tiro's supporters and disdainful of his attempts to impress them with accounts of his glories overseas or with the photo album he displayed:

> Several of the photographs showed him shaking hands with UN officials, chatting with the President of America, joking with McNamara, and so on. Trick photography! My conclusion: Hasan Tiro was not a rich man, nor was he an intelligent man. There was nothing in the man, in his clothes, in his speech, or in his style, that could make me admire him. The only "admiration" I have for him is for his bravery in continuing to trick the people of Aceh! [Saleh 1992, 382]

Others were more convinced. Some young intellectuals were impressed by his academic achievements and his willingness to give up his prosperity abroad. Some villagers were awed by the mystique of his overseas connections; some said he owned a Boeing 747, that he was as rich as Onassis, and that he was organizing fifteen tanks to land on the coast. One man recalled di Tiro explaining to a group of villagers about the Apollo moon landings, and hearing a listener ask if di Tiro's company had been behind them. Di Tiro promised that Aceh would be independent in six months, and they believed him (Daud Paneuk, interview with author, Stockholm, July 12, 2002; see also Saleh 1992, 388).

The Birth of Aceh Merdeka

After his public visit, Hasan di Tiro returned to Aceh clandestinely and established Aceh Merdeka in late 1976 or early 1977.[5] He played a crucial role in restarting rebellion, but he did so by reinvigorating networks that were already

itching for action. What sort of people were attracted to di Tiro's message and joined his movement? There were two main groups, both of which had Darul Islam links.

The first group was a small number of young intellectuals and professionals. Di Tiro was proud of them: "The top leadership of the NLFAS [National Liberation Front of Acheh-Sumatra, the official name of the movement at that time] is largely composed of professionals, university educated, many of them medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, managers, etc. Median age [is] about 30. They are members of the upper and middle class of Acehnese society, all independently wealthy by the country's standard" (di Tiro 1984a, 108). This group dominated the "cabinet" that di Tiro created and included Muchtar Hasbi, whose role in the foundation of Aceh Merdeka was second only to di Tiro's. Muchtar was a young medical school graduate from the University of North Sumatra (Universitas Sumatera Utara, or USU) in Medan. He had met di Tiro some years earlier while studying for a doctorate in tropical medicine in Bangkok. In the Aceh Merdeka cabinet Muchtar was minister of the interior. Several other USU graduates and students joined the cabinet or took on other senior posts. The minister of health was Hasan di Tiro's cousin Zaini Abdullah, a medical school graduate who was running a small hospital in Kuala Simpang. Husaini Hasan, head of obstetrics at USU, became minister of education and culture. Asnawi Ali, a young engineer, was minister of public works and industry; Asnawi previously worked in a "foreign company in Medan as a consultant" and "owned a VW car," a mark of middle-class prosperity at the time (*Tempo*, November 25, 1978, 8). Zubir Mahmud, another medical school graduate was minister of social affairs. Amir Ishak, a law school graduate, was minister of communications.

Intellectuals are often prominent in nationalist movements. Many analysts have suggested that this is not only because of the intellectual and other resources they possess, but also because of the anomie and alienation they feel in societies that are undergoing rapid modernization. Anthony D. Smith (1998, 189), for instance, argued in his early works that the rise of the "scientific state" in the modern era delegitimated religious explanations for the human condition and ultimately propelled many intellectuals, the "modern equivalent of pre-modern clerisies," to turn back to their ethnic pasts for certainty and authenticity. In the case of Aceh, the alienation of the early New Order years was arguably influential. After three decades of exuberant political mobilization, the early 1970s was a time when regime leaders proclaimed they were eliminating all ideology except Pancasila, which was being transformed into a stultifying doctrine of state to match the bureaucracy that gave it birth. It

was a time when the progress of government was measured in tons of rice and kilometers of new roads, and newspapers were full of reports of dignitaries opening the latest factory or bridge. In the cities, a small, still-insecure middle class was beginning its headlong plunge into the consumerism that would characterize the following two decades. In short, this was an environment that offered material satisfaction but little spiritual fulfillment for aspiring members of the new elite. It is possible to see in these young Acehnese intellectuals' embrace of Hasan di Tiro's idealized vision of Aceh's past a parallel to the rejection by nineteenth-century European romantics of the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment and the alienation of the industrial revolution (Gellner 1997, 66–74). Di Tiro offered, in place of the insipid developmentalism of the early New Order, a vision that reconnected them to their cultural moorings and promised them "the joy of the consciousness of playing a part in the writing of our History as we would like it to be, worthy successors to our forefathers" (di Tiro 1984a, 17).

Care should be taken in viewing this group as representative of the Acehnese intelligentsia as a whole. They were a handful of individuals, and all of those named were part of a single clique, to use a word favored by some of them. Along with several other founding members of Aceh Merdeka, they had all studied together at USU in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Husaini Hasan, for instance, shared a house for a time with Asnawi Ali, who in turn was a good friend of Amir Ishak. Husaini, Zaini Abdullah, and Zubir Mahmud had all studied together in the medical faculty; and when Aceh Merdeka was formed, Zubir was working beneath Husaini in the obstetrics department. These men had also been active together in campus politics and social affairs through the Islamic Students Association (HMI) and the Association of Acehnese Students.[6]

This group's studies in Medan set them apart not only as intellectually capable but also as wealthy. Medan acted as the metropolis that Aceh lacked. Located about one hundred kilometers from the southern border of Aceh and home to 636,000 people in 1971 (Biro Pusat Statistik 1974, 37), it was a thriving cosmopolitan center compared to the sleepy, provincial town of Banda Aceh with its population of only 53,600 (Boediono and Hasan 1974, 37). From the 1940s on, Aceh's wealthy merchants often sent their children to Medan to attend high school and, later, the university. There was a thriving Acehnese community in Medan that included wealthy merchants and community associations in which all of the young men were involved. There had sometimes been street violence between Acehnese and Bataks (one of the largest ethnic groups in North Sumatra) but relations were generally harmonious.

It is possible that the minority status of the Acehnese in such a cosmopolitan center heightened the sense of alienation among this group of Acehnese students, making them more receptive to Hasan di Tiro's message. However, this explanation is also not altogether convincing because, as the conspiracy got under way, members of the group did not bring all of their fellow Acehnese students into their confidence. Some of their USU classmates went on to become leaders of Aceh's business, political, and academic elites. What marked the conspirators was that, almost without exception, their fathers had been important in Darul Islam. Husaini Hasan's father, for instance, was killed on the first day of the rebellion when he led a dawn attack on the police barracks in Sigli. His large fish pond, rice mill, and rubber plantation were all confiscated by the government and not returned; his corpse was thrown into a mass grave and the family was not allowed to see it for a year. Zubir Mahmud and his brother Idris (another founding member of Aceh Merdeka who was a student at USU) were the sons of a religious leader from Peureulak who had been a Darul Islam leader. Others conspirators had similar backgrounds. According to the recollections of surviving members of this group, they had learned from their parents about traditions of Acehnese resistance and had been discussing among themselves how to revive them. Many of the rebels nursed grievances about the fate of their fathers or other family members. When Hasan di Tiro visited Aceh, he was thus an attractive figure, not only because of his success overseas, but also because he too was connected to the old Darul Islam networks.

The second main group in the early Aceh Merdeka were older men who had been directly involved in Darul Islam, especially the group that had initially rejected compromise and remained loyal to Daud Beureueh until 1962 (Nessen 2006). Such men, mostly in their late forties and fifties, were especially important in the military structure and logistical network of the new movement. The most senior person in this group was Tengku Ilyas Leube (fifty-seven years old in 1976), a famous *ulama* from Central Aceh who had been a legendary Darul Islam leader. As a child he had studied in Daud Beureueh's Normal Islamic School along with Hasan di Tiro's brother Zainal Abidin, with whom he remained close. Loyal to Daud Beureueh, he was one of the last Darul Islam leaders to make peace with the republic, and in the 1960s and 1970s he became famous in Aceh for his preaching and proselytizing. Others in this category included the movement's finance minister, Muhammad Usman Lampoh Awe, Hasan di Tiro's cousin, whose father was killed during Darul Islam. Muhammad Daud Husin, who was much better known as Daud Paneuk (*Paneuk* being a nickname meaning "Shorty"), was the first Aceh Merdeka army commander. During Darul Islam he had commanded

a battalion in Pidie. He had been among the fighters who stayed with Daud Beureueh in the mountains to the last. Afterward he had been absorbed into the regular army, but disillusioned that he was made only an ordinary soldier, he left in 1965 to become a merchant (Daud Paneuk, interview with author, Stockholm, July 12, 2002). Others in this category were Commander Rasyid and Keuchik Umar, the head of di Tiro's personal guard, who had been police chief in the Tiro district before siding with Darul Islam in 1953 (di Tiro 1984a, 52). Some of the Darul Islam men were linked by family or regional ties to Hasan di Tiro. Most owed their loyalty to Daud Beureueh and would not have joined the new venture without his blessing. Such men played a crucial secondary role in the movement. They provided the military know-how, logistical skills, and local knowledge that the young intellectuals lacked. They knew how to sustain a guerilla movement in the mountains, guide others through the forest, and run clandestine lines of communication, and they had links in local villages.

The first participants to be attracted to Aceh Merdeka included individuals of local substance and position such as owners of large fruit gardens or livestock farms, village heads, and local bureaucrats. Even so, in sharp contrast to the Darul Islam movement, which was led directly by senior *ulama* and bureaucrats, including *bupati*, GAM was a movement of relatively marginal figures. Most of the technocratic and business elite were now tied to the increasingly centralized institutions of the state. Also, Aceh Merdeka supporters were not the sole inheritors of the Darul Islam mantle. Darul Islam had been a massive movement, and much of Aceh's elite and ordinary population had participated in it. Even some of the technocrats and bureaucrats now prominent in official politics had Darul Islam backgrounds.

The networks on which Aceh Merdeka constructed itself also explain the geographical spread of the movement. Although some observers have argued that the movement drew its primary sustenance from localized conflicts over land and pollution caused by the natural gas industry, in fact GAM's geographical spread in its early years was not perfectly matched with the location of the gas industry around Lhokseumawe in North Aceh. At first the center of the revolt was the district of Pidie, which was about one hundred kilometers from the new gas fields and retained a primarily rural economy that was little affected by the gas boom. Pidie was important largely because of the personal influence of Hasan di Tiro and Daud Beureueh, who were both from the Aceh district. So Pidie-centered was GAM in its early years that army and government officials derided it as a form of localism *within* Aceh. Over the next fifteen years or so the chief operating areas for GAM were, along with Pidie, the

neighboring districts of North Aceh (where the gas industry was located) and East Aceh. These areas were the heartland of the ethnic Acehnese. (According to the 1990 census, 97.3 percent of the population in Pidie spoke Acehnese at home.) This east coast distribution also replicated almost exactly the base areas of the old Darul Islam revolt—exactly what would be expected if one impulse driving GAM was a hardening of attitudes among some former participants in the earlier movement.[7] It was only after the collapse of the Soeharto regime that the movement struck strong roots in the central highlands, on the south and west coasts, and in the Aceh Besar district around Banda Aceh.

Life in the Forest

In a study of the post-World War II era, James Fearon and David Laitin (2003) argue that, rather than ethnic diversity, factors favoring insurgency best account for where civil wars have occurred. One factor they highlight is rough terrain. The point may seem obvious, but it is worth stressing in Aceh's case.

Acehnese territory is well-suited for guerilla warfare. Running along the center of the territory is the Bukit Barisan mountain range. Its lower slopes are covered with plantations, farms, and villages, but its heights are covered with thick forest that forms a continuous band running the length of the territory. As they were in earlier conflicts, Aceh's mountains were a redoubt for Aceh Merdeka fighters. Moreover, in the 1970s Aceh was poorly served by transportation links. Most of the roads were built during the Dutch period and were limited to the flat plains of the north and east. They connected Banda Aceh with Medan, leaving "a vast hinterland inaccessible and immobile" (Boediono and Hasan 1974, 49). As Governor Ibrahim Hasan later put it, the lack of roads in the interior effectively made Aceh a "coastal state" (*Editor*, April 15, 1989, 11). Complaints about the lack of roads, the dilapidated condition of the roads from the Dutch period, and the absence of bridges over even major rivers feature prominently in press reports from the period. Poor transport, inaccessible terrain, and local knowledge meant that Aceh Merdeka guerillas were time and again able to evade the security forces.

During most of his seventeen months in the interior, di Tiro stayed in camps in the mountains of the Tiro region in Pidie, the land of his birth. He seldom moved away, and when he did it generally ended badly, with his band stumbling into ambushes or running out of food. The Tiro region is remote and forested. Sometimes it would take several days to march from the nearest village to his camp. At times he and his followers had to climb slopes that were almost perpendicular. The Aceh Merdeka leader had plenty of time to reflect on the hardships of life in the forest, which was "infested with snakes,

tigers, boars, elephants, crocodiles, swarms of leeches . . ." (di Tiro 1984a, 235). Occasionally he was lost in reveries about what he had left behind: "I recalled with great nostalgia my many pleasant walks on New York's Fifth Avenue and Paris's Champs Elysée." At other times he was overcome by the beauty of Aceh's natural landscape, and consumed by fury thinking of the loggers who were destroying it.

Although di Tiro's group was protected by Aceh's forest, it was not much of a guerilla army. With its perhaps two hundred fighters, Aceh Merdeka barely represented a military force. Yusuf Daud (at the time a frequent visitor to di Tiro's camps by virtue of being the sixteen-year-old son of di Tiro's chief military commander, Daud Paneuk) estimates that all of the Aceh Merdeka forces combined had only about twenty guns, mostly of World War II vintage, which had been stored away since Darul Islam times. Yusuf even recalls Tengku Ilyas Leube joking with young men like him, when they left camp, not to mention to anyone that they had no weapons (Yusuf Daud, interview with author, Stockholm, July 2002). For men like Tengku Ilyas, who had led massed attacks on army posts in the 1950s, the lack of weapons was doubtlessly vexing. Certainly di Tiro's detractors criticize him for failing to deliver on his promises to supply modern arms.

Even so, after a few months the movement did mount a few armed attacks, but against soft targets. After di Tiro demanded "taxes" from foreign companies working the Arun gas fields, in December 1977 a small group of armed men attacked a remote wellhead, where they shot and killed one American construction worker (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 25, 1978; Schulze 2004). There were also attacks on transmigrants aimed at dissuading the "Javanese colonialist settlers from moving to our territory" (di Tiro 1984a, 136). Nobody, however, recalls major clashes between groups of guerillas and Indonesian security forces.

Hasan di Tiro's attempts to extract money from the foreign companies working the gas fields were partly motivated by his movement's lack of weapons. One source of insight into this connection is provided by the series of letters that di Tiro wrote from Aceh to his friend and mentor Edward Lansdale. In March 1978 di Tiro asked Lansdale to "convey this message to the Government in Washington: it should advise Mobil & Bechtel to negotiate with the State of Acheh for accommodation." Three months later di Tiro acknowledged, "What I need most, right now, Ed, is guns. I will give my arms and everything for that." He came straight to the point:

> The purpose of the taxes demanded from Mobil and Bechtel is to enable us to buy the guns with that money. Therefore, if you can arrange in Washington to have someone send me by air drop some 100 M16 rifles with about 1,000 rounds of ammuni-

> tion each, or similar equipments [sic], right now, then I can forget the whole thing about Mobil and Bechtel and about their taxations. And I can guarantee that those arms will never be used against Americans or American interests.

Di Tiro added that if a private party would help him, he would pay "$1 million . . . to them in the near future, or any amount they may ask."[8]

Di Tiro's desperate tone was justified. Once Indonesian security forces got wind of the presence of di Tiro's group in the hills, they were forced to be on the move continually. Participants recall that serious armed clashes began in late 1977 or early 1978. Di Tiro's *Unfinished Diary* recounts forty camp shifts by the time he was forced to flee Aceh. He was constantly concerned with security lapses by his men and by villagers who, in their enthusiasm to see him, left well-beaten paths to his hiding places. Di Tiro and his band moved ever more frequently, whenever they sighted military patrols nearby or learned that an offensive was planned. Sometimes, they had to go without food for days. Troops ambushed their scouts and supply parties. Eventually an armed clash left di Tiro in the company of just five men, and he decided to make use of the common belief that he had been killed to "go abroad to prepare the struggle for the final victorious phase" (Di Tiro 1984a, 341). He left Aceh in a wooden fishing boat, in which he crossed the Malacca Strait.

For most of 1977, however, Hasan di Tiro and his band had been relatively unhindered. During those months he had, by his own account, been free to admire the beauty of the landscape, revel in the loyalty of his masculine company, and give grand speeches on regular "national holidays." Most of all, he had been free to do what he enjoyed most: lecturing and writing. The camps had a decidedly nonmilitary feel. As Finngeir Hiorth (1986a, 184) observed, "In fact, Tiro ran his movement as if he had a product to sell from a New York office." In di Tiro's own words, "After the temporary living quarters is [sic] finished, the men immediately prepared a make-shift office: typewriters' tables, radio communication centre, printing quarters, etc. Everything else can be postponed but not the office works as this is the nerve centre of our Revolution: the whole country receives instructions, guidance and order from this 'office'" (di Tiro 1984a, 216).

This clerklike approach to revolution was deliberate. Di Tiro's view—which was, by his own admission, partly derived from Mao—was that the struggle would progress by stages. At first, his activities were merely "preparatory to armed struggle" (di Tiro 1984a, 28). Conditions were not yet ripe for full-scale armed conflict. The movement's primary concern was propaganda: "Essentially this is an educational and missionary movement to re-educate my people about themselves, their history, their culture, their economy, their past

and their proper future" (di Tiro 1984a, 31). He had written so many books on this topic that the task of the people was now clear: "The only thing they have to do now is read!" (di Tiro 1984a, 18).

The Appeal to History

Secessionist movements almost always justify their claims to self-determination by constructing ethnohistories of glorious independent statehood stretching back to antiquity. The surviving writings of Hasan di Tiro, the best remaining sources on Aceh Merdeka thinking in the 1970s, reveal an interest in Aceh's history that is best described as obsessive. Emphasis on history remained central to the movement's ideology over the following decades and was reproduced in countless books, pamphlets, magazines, speeches, and sermons in village mosques and meeting halls.

Di Tiro believed that his mission was to lead the Acehnese people to "recovery of their historic personality" (di Tiro 1984a, 158). In his memoir of his guerilla life, he repeatedly depicts himself as the agent of Aceh's historical rebirth:

> I have combed the world in search of our historic documents, for incontestable records to reconstruct our great history, and I have brought all that back to our fatherland, to pass them on to the new generation. For that I have to go to live in the forests while being shot at with intent to kill by the Javanese/"indonesian" colonialist. I feel like Prometheus: I had brought back the fire to my people after 25 years search in Europe, America and all over the world. Now I have passed on that fire, that torch to the new generation, to light up our ancestors' paths again, so that we can follow them. [1984a, 233]

Di Tiro's interest in Aceh's history was not unique. Since the 1930s there had been growing interest in Aceh's past among a range of actors. This interest continued in the early New Order period when, as we have seen, official historical discourse served the dual purposes of legitimating special territory status and writing Aceh into the Indonesian national narrative. In public seminars and publications in the early 1970s, Acehnese academics and officials celebrated Aceh's sultanate, its nineteenth-century resistance to the Dutch, its contribution to the Indonesian independence struggle, and its role as seeding ground of Islam for the archipelago. These activities overlapped with the subterranean processes that surrounded the birth of Aceh Merdeka. Some of the contributors to these public discussions about history in the early 1970s became involved in Aceh Merdeka a few years later. Their earlier contributions were sometimes on topics or themes that later became central to Aceh Merdeka arguments.[9]

What was unique in Hasan di Tiro's approach was the centrality of history to his political vision and, more important, the uses to which he put it. In ear-

lier episodes of resistance, historical references were always secondary to the emphasis on Islam. In Aceh Merdeka materials, Islam did not disappear, but it was overshadowed. Historical arguments became the foundation for the entire ideological edifice; without them it would have collapsed.

Di Tiro's interpretation of history can be summarized as follows. First, Aceh was an independent state and a great nation from time immemorial (in a later interview, di Tiro dates the beginning of the Acehnese as 1500 BCE; *Forum Keadilan*, April 2, 2000, 80). Di Tiro pays much attention to Aceh's past glories and achievements, especially to the high regard in which it was held by foreign powers. Second, the Acehnese were illegally attacked by the Dutch. Although they resisted heroically, this assault ultimately resulted in the theft of Aceh's independence (although the Dutch never fully succeeded in subduing the Acehnese). Third, the illegal conquest by the Dutch was continued by the Javanese, who used the "fabrication" of "indonesia" (di Tiro almost never capitalizes the word) to mask their dominance. Here we have di Tiro's most ambitious innovation. He glosses over Acehnese participation in the Indonesian independence struggle (a struggle in which he played a part, it will be remembered) as a moment of national forgetfulness: "When a people lost their group consciousness and forgot their history, they can no longer exercise their right to self-determination. That was what happened to the Acehnese generation of 1945" (di Tiro 1984a, 28). Fourth, it was now time to reawaken as a nation and reclaim Aceh's place in the world.

I am resisting the temptation to quote extensively from di Tiro's writings. They have an oddly compelling grandiose style and are brazen in their historical reinvention. They also present a textbook case—indeed, almost a parody—of ethnohistory, replete with the techniques and tonalities of nationalist intellectuals of different times and places. Remove the peculiarities of place and culture and we could have a text from a nineteenth-century Balkan or Scandinavian nationalist intellectual.

The next sections look at two purposes of di Tiro's historical writings. I will restrain myself here to note the larger point: his interpretation of Acehnese history acts to construct the Acehnese as a distinct nation (*bangsa*) based on blood descent and imbued with heritable traits and political implications, and not merely as an ethnic group (*suku bangsa*) within a larger Indonesia. His is an ethnonationalist vision. When describing Acehnese identity, di Tiro refers to "primordial duty" and "the instinct for the survival of the herd, the group, the race, the nation, and the state" (di Tiro 1984a, 11). He assigns to the Acehnese various noble virtues, describing them as "emotional, thoughtful, exuberant, unyielding, loyal and heroic" (135). This "psychology" (another

favorite word of his) is inherited: "Your ancestors are not dead. They live on in your blood" (69). Yet the Acehnese have forgotten themselves, so his writings repeatedly call for national "rebirth," "reawakening," and "renaissance." Remaining true to history promises a glorious future: "History is our deepest root, our strongest fortress that cannot be made to naught by Dutchmen or by Javamen or by anyone else. . . . Our retroactive force is indestructible. For no one can destroy what it was. We, who is [sic] sure of our past is [sic] also certain of our future!" (146).

Di Tiro does more than use the grandeur of Acehnese history to illustrate the authenticity of Acehnese identity, however. He contrasts both Aceh's history and its authenticity with Indonesia, which he presents as a recent and artificial historical fabrication. Indeed, he constructs an image of the Acehnese nation by holding up a mirror to Indonesia. In contrast to the modern roots of Indonesia are the ancient origins of Aceh; in place of the multiethnicity of Indonesia is the blood-borne authenticity of the Acehnese.

Indonesia Becomes Java

It has become a truism in studies of identity that social groups generate their sense of themselves in relation to what they are not. Actors seeking to generate group identity define that identity not simply by enumerating the shared traits of the group, but also by identifying an other whose presence marks the group's outer boundary. By elucidating the other's undesirable traits, the group's spokespeople turn a mirror on themselves, casting into brighter relief their own pleasing and unique features.

In the case of Aceh we must do more than note this universal process and move on. Hasan di Tiro and other Acehnese nationalists were vitriolic in denigrating Aceh's national enemy. Most modern nationalist movements do this. The Tamils and the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, for example, have developed complex nationalist demonologies, tracing their enmity back into the mists of time. Serbian, Croatian, and other nationalists in the Balkans have denigrated each other and found roots for their present hostility in ancient battles. The Acehnese nationalist version of alterity does this, but also goes further. It not only denigrates Indonesian national identity; it also denies that identity's authenticity, even its very existence. In Hasan di Tiro's terms, "indonesians" are a "non-existent human species" (di Tiro 1984a, 68). In his writings, the very idea of Indonesia is an absurd falsehood, a thin façade covering Javanese dominance. His "redeclaration of independence" puts it succinctly, that

> "indonesia" was a fraud: a cloak to cover up Javanese colonialism. Since the world begun [sic], there never was a people, much less a nation, in our part of the world by

> that name. No such people existed in the Malay Archipelago by definitions of ethnology, philology, cultural anthropology, sociology, or by any other scientific findings. "Indonesia" is merely a new label, in a totally foreign nomenclature which has nothing to do with our own history, language, culture or interests; it was a new label considered useful by the Dutch to replace the despicable "Dutch East Indies" in an attempt to unite the administration of their ill-gotten far-flung colonies; and the Javanese neocolonialists knew of its usefulness to gain fraudulent recognition from the unsuspecting world, ignorant of the history of the Malay Archipelago. [di Tiro 1984a, 26]

Di Tiro directly attacked the Javanese in his writings. In his 1978 play, *The Drama of Acehnese History, 1873–1978*, the Javanese characters are all messengers, mercenaries, or servants of the Dutch. In one early scene a "tall impressive Achehnese guard" ushers into the court "a small, short, skinny and awkward-looking old creature in Javanese costume" who "speaks in broken Malay with ridiculous accent—Javanese style" (di Tiro 1979, 1). This action elicits a comment by a minor character, an Acehnese commander who had studied in the French military academy, that the Javanese are "an effeminate race, with an infantile culture," good only as servants. The character adds that "anthropologists say they are descendants of 'Java-men,' which in Latin is referred to as *pichtecantropus erectus*, which means 'walking apes'" (di Tiro 1979, 4).

It may seem odd that a late-twentieth-century Southeast Asian nationalist would put nineteenth-century European pseudoscientific theories about race into the mouths of his nineteenth-century Southeast Asian characters, but such can be the ironies of postcolonial nationalism. In his *Unfinished Diary* he elaborates on his theories about the Javanese at many points, variously describing them as uncivilized barbarians (di Tiro 1984a, 118) who "have no honors and know no chivalry" (156), as "stupid" (201), and as "an insolent people who know no gratitude" (231). At one point he reminds his readers that monkeys were "a very distant relative of the Javanese, but relatives nevertheless" (212). Elsewhere he returns to the theme that the Javanese "have strong traces of *pithecanthropus erectus* lines" (317). What is noteworthy here is not simply the denigration of the Javanese, nor the origins of this attitude in colonial racism, but that the focus should be on the Javanese rather than on Indonesia. This notion became a stock part of the GAM message. Most propaganda produced by the movement over succeeding decades repeated the theme that Indonesia disguised Javanese dominance. In the late 1990s, for instance, GAM military commanders in the field regularly denounced the Indonesian army in their communiqués as Serdadu Bandit Indonesia Jawa (SBIJ, or Indonesian-Javanese Mercenary Bandits).

The immediate context for this targeting of the Javanese is not hard to find. The 1950s Darul Islam revolt had already been marked by hostility to outsiders

on ethnic grounds. Some Darul Islam documents attacked the Hindu and Majapahit pretensions of the Javanese-dominated central government; but because that government was a remote enemy, most opprobrium was reserved for the Minangkabau and Batak soldiers whom Darul Islam fighters faced on the field of battle (Aspinall 2006). By the mid-1970s, consolidation of the state and modern communication had made the national government and its policies more visible to ordinary Acehnese. The education system was standardized, with the curriculum including more material on civics and national history. National radio and, later, television broadcast into villages speeches by government ministers and Javanese artistic performances. By 1987, according to the intercensal survey of that year, already 49 percent—close to the national figure of 53.7 percent—of people surveyed in Aceh said they had watched television during the previous week. The expansion of the modern economy brought more outsiders into the province. The transmigration program was expanded to include Aceh, meaning that more than thirty-five thousand settlers, mostly Javanese, arrived there between 1969 and 1983 (Drake 1989, 131).

Grumbles about Javanese dominance were not unusual. Since the early days of the republic, many Indonesians in Sumatra, Sulawesi, and elsewhere had feared Javanese hegemony. The regional and Islamic rebellions of the 1950s had often been expressed in anti-Javanese terms. Many Indonesians, as well as outside analysts, saw the trend toward authoritarianism beginning in the 1950s as a victory of a centralizing impulse that was allegedly part of traditional Javanese thought. Moreover, in the 1970s the regime was assuming a Javanist appearance. President Soeharto, like some other senior military officers, had a mystical Javanist background and scattered Javanese aphorisms and folk wisdom throughout his speeches. Many officials followed suit. This does not mean that the regime was a vehicle for chauvinist Javanese interests. The Javanese did not form a privileged caste, but their sheer number (including in the bureaucracy), the regime's authoritarian nature, and the background of the president conspired to create an impression of Javanese dominance.

But searching for the social and political context for Aceh Merdeka's anti-Javanese animus largely misses the point. The real target of attacks was not the Javanese themselves, or even the Indonesian state. The chief target was other Acehnese. As we have seen, during the early twentieth century, many Acehnese had begun to imagine themselves as linked to an Indonesia-wide community. Independence normalized Acehnese identification with the Indonesian nation. By the mid-1970s, a generation had grown up in an Indonesian framework. Most Acehnese thought of themselves as both Acehnese and Indonesian, and saw no contradiction in inhabiting both identities. This was

the chief ideological obstacle faced by the Acehnese nationalists. By transforming Indonesian identity into Javanese identity, Hasan di Tiro and his followers were trying to make the overlap impossible. If Indonesians were simply Javanese in disguise, one could not be both Achenese and Indonesian. As di Tiro put it, "Any Achehnese who has come to believe that he is not Achehnese anymore but 'indonesian' . . . is suffering from acute identity crisis, in fact he has gone mad." Acehnese who cooperated with the Javanese had sold their birthright and were "worse than bastards because you lost inheritance from both parents" (di Tiro 1984a, 68). Constant vigilance was needed against such people so that the Acehnese could know themselves: "It was very important to know who were 'us' and who were 'them'—the enemy: the Javanese / 'indonesian' invaders. We have to watch out for any Achehnese who had [sic] made himself the agent for the foreign invaders" (di Tiro 1984a, 248).

In sum, transforming Indonesia into Java was first and foremost a way to draw a dividing line between the Acehnese and their national enemy. Some founders of the movement who later became nervous about accusations of racism leveled against them conceded that they made the Javanese the chief enemy because it was hard to classify who were their enemies and who were their allies. Husaini Hasan, for instance, said that the early logic went as follows:

> We want to be *merdeka*. Who is it who wants to be Free? Aceh. From what do we want to be free? Indonesia. Who is it who holds Indonesia? Java. So what we saw was that everything was a kind of Javanese colonialism toward the people outside of Java. All those generals whose names ended with o, o, o.[10] [Interview with author, Stockholm, June 13, 2004]

Husaini stressed, however, that it was not all the Javanese people who were bad; it was "Javanese policy" that was bad. Moreover, he said it was important to use the term *Java*, because it was necessary to "explain who our enemy was; because 'Indonesia' was not clear. Some people, some Acehnese people, said that they themselves were Indonesians" (interview with author, Stockholm, June 13, 2004).

Demonization of the Javanese did not come easily to all early adherents of Aceh Merdeka. For example, one such early member, Razali Abdullah, said that at first he found it hard to accept when he learned from Zubir Mahmud that they should treat the Javanese as their enemy. Many Javanese worked in his parents' plantation, and he considered many of them to be like family. So he really had to study why the Javanese should be considered enemies. It was only when he read Machiavelli (another of Hasan di Tiro's favored authors) that he learned that rulers could deliberately destroy a people

by migration and intermarriage. He realized that the Acehnese would be pushed aside (interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004).

In summary, although Acehnese nationalism was a form of ethnic nationalism, it was not motivated by a search for ethnic purity for its own sake. Instead, the ethnic vision was a response to official Indonesian representations of national identity and multiculturalism. Acehnese nationalism was founded on an attempt to contrast the antiquity and authenticity of Acehnese identity with the novelty and inauthenticity of Indonesia.

The Claim to Sovereignty

Twenty years after the events described in this chapter, in 1999 and 2000, Acehnese youths twice protested outside the Dutch embassy in Jakarta. No doubt to the surprise of the staff inside, they read statements demanding that the Dutch government revoke its 1873 declaration of war against Aceh. Around the same time, GAM armed forces commander Abdullah Syafi'ie explained that the real conflict in Aceh was still against the Dutch: "It is only the government of Holland which has the right to conclude its warfare with the Acehnese nation which began on March 26, 1873"(*Waspada*, December 5, 1999). Although it had been more than fifty years since the Dutch had left Aceh for good, these actions portrayed them as principals to the conflict. These anachronistic protests draw attention to another aspect of the historical discourse promoted by Hasan di Tiro, an aspect that became a mainstay of Aceh Merdeka analysis: it used history to fashion arguments about sovereignty for both the domestic and the international audience.

The new nationalism promoted by Hasan di Tiro and his followers was above all state-seeking. When a nationalist movement aspires to statehood, it steps out of the realm of imagination and collective identity into the domain of the international system of states. Each nationalist movement is required to enter into dialogue with that system and stake a claim for representation in it. A nationalist movement therefore needs to do more than assert its identity. Collective identity, after all, is possessed by all manner of subnational minority groups. In the international system, the currency that counts is not bonds of solidarity, sentiment, and community, but sovereignty, a concept that is at least as old as nationalism. The concept of the sovereign equality of all states, in which is embodied the principle of the inviolability and territorial integrity of each state, is the bedrock of the international system. To gain entry into that system, all nationalist movements must make a case for sovereignty of their own. The main means by which they have done so over the last century has been by the doctrine of self-determination, which, especially since the high

period of decolonization after World War II, has been a constitutive principle of the international system. The United Nations Charter, for instance, declares its support for the principle of the "self-determination of peoples" (Chapter I, Article 1.2).

From the start, however, the exercise of the right of self-determination has been subject to limits, especially concerning the central question of which groups are properly defined as the "peoples" to whom the right applies. There has never been recognition of a general right to secede from sovereign states. Instead, self-determination has been closely linked to the struggle against colonialism (Buchanan 1992). In the dominant UN interpretation, with few exceptions, groups who constitute a "people" for the purposes of self-determination are the inhabitants of colonies. Moreover, self-determination is only for peoples located within the boundaries of *existing* states or colonies. A new (independent) state can succeed, and thereby replace, an old (colonial) one; but most such new states adhere to colonial boundaries. In part, this approach flows from the historic association of sovereignty with states rather than with their populations (Mayall 1999, 476). "Self-determination" has had little to do with "peoples" or "nations," understood as collectivities who believe they share a common history, culture, or national destiny. The doctrine of self-determination thus impels concepts of sovereignty and state succession to the center of the secessionist agenda.

Hasan di Tiro was uniquely placed among Acehnese to comprehend and respond to this international context. For more than twenty years he was physically located in New York City, at the heart of the evolving international system. He emphasized the influence on his political views of his "about 20 years" of training in political science, international law, and related topics at American universities, including Columbia and Fordham (di Tiro 1984a, 162–163). Certainly when he made his debut into international politics in 1954, by declaring himself ambassador of, as he styled it, the Islamic Republic of Indonesia, he was sensitive to the evolving idiom of international politics and was careful to frame his attacks on the Indonesian government in terms most likely to attract international sympathy (hence his condemnation of Ali Sastroamidjojo's government for the crime of "genocide," a term that had barely entered the international lexicon in 1954). In later decades he wrote extensively on the concept of self-determination itself, taking issue with elements of the evolving international consensus that were disadvantageous to the Free Aceh cause, or casting the movement's demands in ways that seemed to fall within its remit.

History thus not only served identity construction but also was a way to give the movement international legitimacy and establish a legal basis for

independence. The key was to narrate Aceh's history in terms of contemporary doctrines and, especially, to overcome the stumbling block that former colonies could exercise self-determination only once and within the boundaries inherited from the colonial power. Accordingly, di Tiro and his followers argued that an independent Aceh (embodied in their own organization) was the successor state of the precolonial Acehnese sultanate. Viewed in this light, many of the odd cadences in GAM views of history are explicable.

For instance, the purpose of GAM's emphasis on Aceh's past glories, especially on the esteem in which the old sultanate was held by foreign powers, was not only to generate pride but also to show that the sultanate had been a legitimate sovereign actor in the international state system. This is why di Tiro emphasized such events as the dispatch of ambassadors by the sultanate to European and other states, statements by foreign heads of state recognizing Acehnese sovereignty, and the treaties entered into by Aceh. Prominent among these was an 1819 treaty of friendship negotiated between the sultanate and Sir Stamford Raffles, British East India Company Lieutenant Governor of Fort Marlborough (Bengkulu, Sumatra) and founder of the British colony of Singapore. It is on the basis of the latter that di Tiro later stated that an independent Aceh might become a member of the British Commonwealth (*Forum Keadilan*, April 2, 2000, 78–81).

Di Tiro and his successors' emphasis on the illegality of the 1873 Dutch invasion and of Aceh's subsequent incorporation into Indonesia are part of the same successor-state argument, because both suggest an unbroken line of sovereignty connecting the sultanate to themselves. Di Tiro and his followers depicted the invasion as an illegal act similar to Indonesia's 1975 annexation of East Timor. They emphasized the positions taken by foreign powers, especially the official neutrality adopted by the United States. To "prove" that Aceh was never legally incorporated into the Netherlands East Indies, di Tiro and his colleagues insisted that Aceh was never defeated by the Dutch, with whom a state of war continued until they were forced to leave Aceh in 1942. Then, the argument continued, Holland transferred sovereignty over Aceh (which it did not legally possess) to the new colonizer, Indonesia. This transfer of sovereignty was another illegal act on which Indonesian claims to Aceh rested. Di Tiro thus responded to the international consensus that only former colonies could exercise self-determination by depicting Indonesia not as an ex-colony but as continuing the Dutch colonial mission. In his view, self-determination should be exercised by those who retained an unbroken right to sovereign power—the states invaded by the Dutch, not the state created by them. In short, di Tiro and his colleagues attempted to ground their claim in what

Allen Buchanan (1992, 353) calls the principle of *rectificatory justice*, whereby "secession is simply the reappropriation, by the legitimate owners, of stolen property."

To outsiders, such claims had little chance of international recognition and contained vulgar distortions of the historical record. Gerry van Klinken (2001, 339) described di Tiro's views on history and Acehnese statehood as "purely propagandistic." Tim Kell (1995, 63, 65) wrote that they were "inherently flawed" and "far-fetched." Established practice in the post-World War II order certainly stood hard against the claims. Likewise, regardless of what Acehnese nationalists said about the validity of Dutch and Indonesian sovereignty, it is clear that Aceh was administratively incorporated into the Dutch East Indies and the modern Indonesian Republic, bringing into play the principle of *uti possidetis*, according to which states are assumed to have valid sovereignty over territory they control. Even so, it is understandable that Acehnese nationalists felt compelled to make these arguments in an international system that otherwise gave little space to their aspirations for statehood.

The main point to be derived from the preceding discussion is that Acehnese nationalist claims and interpretations of Acehnese identity were shaped through interaction with the international system. The arguments about Aceh's historical and legal rights to independence were largely developed by Hasan di Tiro and other leaders while they were in exile. Their views reflect the romanticism typical of what Benedict Anderson (1992) calls the long-distance nationalist, as well as the frustrations of those seeking international support. In the early 1980s, di Tiro and his close supporters, based in Sweden, expended much energy trying to gain entry into major international organizations and obtain recognition for GAM as the legitimate representative of the Acehnese people. "Circulating in the eddies and backwaters of the international diplomatic scene" (Robinson 1998, 133), the most they achieved was access to the outermost fringes of the international system via such bodies as the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. Bitter about the indifference of the UN and the major powers (di Tiro 1995), they still felt compelled to build their claims in the accepted idiom of the international system.

Propagation and Reception of Nationalism

Hasan di Tiro's vision was innovative. He called on the Acehnese to cast aside their identification as Indonesians. He drew on parts of the Darul Islam message but transformed them. He took the inchoate sense of ethnic difference present in the earlier rebellion and placed it at the center of his program. Aceh's history and claim to sovereignty shouldered aside the Islamic foundation of

previous generations of Acehnese resistance. Aceh Merdeka supporters were now urged to think of their enemies not as *kafir* and apostates but as ethnic rivals and colonial overlords. This was a message that needed to be propagated. Toward that end, di Tiro believed that "the typewriters are our machine guns, for now" (di Tiro 1984a, 229). His adherents called the brochures they produced "bombs without sound."

Di Tiro's life of typing deep within the forest was not the norm for early Aceh Merdeka supporters. He never had more than a few dozen men with him in his camp. Most recruits stayed in their home districts. Even most cabinet members returned home after being sworn in. There, in probably no more than a few dozen villages and small towns along Aceh's east coast, they engaged in the core task of the movement: propaganda. In most cases only tiny numbers were involved. Usman Hanafi recalls that only about ten persons participated "by whispers" in each subdistrict in East Aceh (interview with author, Simpang Ulim, November 14, 2007); in some more remote districts, like South Aceh, the names of lone individuals who strove to build the movement in those early years are still remembered to this day. Early sympathizers recall passing brochures to friends, or sliding them anonymously under the office doors of fellow employees at Mobil Oil or into the letter boxes of foreign consulates in Medan. Armed men stopped buses traveling on the road from Medan to Banda Aceh and distributed flyers to the passengers. Reports from subversion trials mention open-air meetings where speakers addressed hundreds of villagers (*Tapol Bulletin*, July 1980, 4). For a time there was even an Aceh Merdeka radio transmitter that broadcast propaganda messages.

Most propaganda work, however, was word-of-mouth. Early adherents of Aceh Merdeka always began by contacting people they already knew and trusted. Typically they would first convince close relatives or friends, then wider circles of acquaintances. They would target older people known to have been important in Darul Islam. This approach meant the movement spread organically through established kinship and friendship networks. In seeking to extend the movement's influence into a new geographical region, activists always started with somebody they knew. They would spend hours in private homes or coffee shops, patiently explaining the movement's goals. Leaders might descend from their forest camp and talk in the early hours of the morning, when all was quiet in the village. Clandestine adherents could stay in their home village and spread the message at seemingly innocuous gatherings. Sometimes a locally influential community leader would be invited to spend several weeks at Hasan di Tiro's camp, where di Tiro ran short courses on ide-

ology. Once he understood the message, the "graduate" would return home to spread the word. Emphasis was placed on secrecy and security, although in some villages Aceh Merdeka quickly became common knowledge.

How did people respond to the message? This question is difficult to answer given the passage of time. In the official transcript of Acehnese nationalist recollection, it was an easy task to reignite the glowing embers of national consciousness. For men like Hasan di Tiro, as for romantic nationalists the world over, there is a transcendental quality to national identity. Although the Acehnese had "forgotten" their identity and were in danger of being "erased" forever, they had only to be reminded of their bloodline, history, and culture to throw off their false Indonesian identity. In fact, there are indications that it was not always easy to convince people. At first, even many supporters did not grasp the novelty of the message. Eric Morris (1983, 301), who interviewed several supporters of Aceh Merdeka at that time, noted that some were more interested in an Islamic Indonesia, or even in a better deal for Aceh within a federal Indonesia, than in independence. Some early recruits today laughingly recall that they were at first puzzled. Many participants say some ordinary villagers supported Aceh Merdeka because they saw it as a continuation of Darul Islam. Other observers suggest that many villagers did not clearly differentiate the movement from the PPP, which in the 1977 elections campaigned heavily on an Islamic platform. (In fact, Aceh Merdeka distributed leaflets calling for an election boycott.) Urban and sophisticated people more readily saw the novelty of the message, but many reacted with amusement or derision, viewing Hasan di Tiro as an upstart and dreamer purveying a distorted version of history.

Core supporters found di Tiro's ideas to be revelatory. Many recall a moment of awakening. Razali Abdullah, for instance, as a young Aceh Merdeka supporter in Peureulak, recalls that he was "amazed" by di Tiro's ideas: "This was a history which was truly new for us. You could say that it made the hair on the back of one's neck stand up. It was something so strange" (interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004). Usman Hanafi, who was in the same district, agreed that independence was a startling goal: "I had never heard of an independence movement before. It was the first time I'd heard of this idea: that we, the Acehnese were a *bangsa* not a *suku*. Indonesia teaches us we were a *suku*, but history teaches us we were a *bangsa*" (interview with author, Simpang Ulim, November 14, 2007). Husaini Hasan recalls that revelations about how Acehnese resistance had been praised internationally in the nineteenth century "made our blood catch fire" (interview with author, Stockholm, June 5, 2004). One early supporter committed to memory a long booklet on this topic and could recite it when asked. Others composed versions of di Tiro's

message in verse in order to convey them to villagers used to entertainment in this medium.

The main task of the new converts was to convince ordinary Acehnese that they were not Indonesians but only Acehnese. Some leaders of the movement recall with relish today the techniques they used to meet this challenge. For Husaini Hasan it was easy:

> We asked people, "You have an Indonesian identity card, don't you? Did your mother know what Indonesia was? Did your grandmother know? You eat Acehnese rice, don't you? You speak Acehnese. You live in Aceh. Well, why did you suddenly become Indonesian? Why do we need them to send a governor, a government, from Jakarta to control us? Later, when our oil is finished, we'll have to beg from them. Why should we beg for it? We have enough ourselves." [Interview with author, Stockholm, June 13, 2004)

A GAM leader in Pase (North Aceh) in the early 1990s, Guree Rahman, had a similar recollection:

> We would tell them, "We Acehnese have a nation, a state, a language, a culture of our own. From the olden days. It is all complete." Then we would ask them, "What year did Indonesia come into being? Only 1945, wasn't it? What is Indonesian culture?" They all wouldn't be able to answer. They would give answers and we'd say, "No, that's Minang, that's Javanese," and so on. "Which one is Indonesian?" "Where is there an Indonesian language?" [They would answer and we would say,] "That is Malay." We enjoyed proving that Indonesia was a make-believe nation. It was very easy. [Interview with author, Stockholm, June 12, 2004]

Others tell a different story and say it was sometimes hard to win over their audience. Some people suspected that the movement would flare out quickly, like Darul Islam. Others found it difficult to understand how Aceh Merdeka differed from the earlier movement, and found the idea of an eternal Acehnese nation and its past glories remote from their daily lives.

Another result, as one early member from Peureulak put it, was that "we entered via development," "social sentiment," and "economic injustice." Early propagandists thus made much of issues like alleged discrimination in employment and exploitation of Aceh's natural resources by "Java." "If we entered via nationalism, we wouldn't have been accepted" (Razali Abdullah, interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004). In short, Aceh Merdeka propaganda also emphasized grievances. Although I have not been able to locate any of these original pamphlets, the following extract from the "re-declaration of independence" conveys the flavor:

> The Javanese, nevertheless, are attempting to perpetuate colonialism which all the Western colonial powers have abandoned and all the world has condemned. During these last thirty years, the people of Acheh, Sumatra, have witnessed how our father-

> land has been exploited and driven into ruinous conditions by the Javanese neo-colonialists: they have stolen our properties; they have abused the education of our children; they have exiled our leaders; they have put our people in chains of tyranny, poverty, and neglect: the life expectancy of our people has been reduced to 34 years and is decreasing—compare this to the world's standard of 70 years and . . . increasing! While Acheh, Sumatra, has been producing a revenue of over 15 billion US dollar [sic] yearly for the Javanese neo-colonialists, which they used totally for the benefit of Java and the Javanese. [di Tiro 1984a, 26]

It is in such propaganda that we can see how the relationship between grievances—in this case, about natural resources—and Aceh Merdeka ideology worked. The Aceh Merdeka approach exemplified in such statements was, as Eric Morris (1983, 300) has observed, "a logical extension of the assumptions underlying the technocrats' marginalist ideology." The technocrats, who were dominant in Aceh's provincial government during the Soeharto years, had consistently proclaimed that rather than concentrating on politics or religion, the Acehnese should see themselves as residents of a backward region in a rapidly developing Indonesia, and that the government should concentrate on helping Aceh to catch up with the rest of the country. Aceh Merdeka extended the technocrats' arguments about backwardness by locating a precise cause for Acehnese impoverishment (Java) and by putting forward a simple solution (independence). The rebel movement's emphasis on natural resources was thus a counter to a set of ideas that was dominating Aceh's political landscape. Aceh Merdeka's attack on the government for its alleged draining of Aceh's natural riches was a way for it to respond to and denigrate dominant official discourse, and to distinguish the movement from its local adversaries. The relationship between grievance, identity formation, and rebellion was thus not simple or unidirectional. To argue that the rebellion was merely or even mostly a reflection in the population of a living sense of resentment about natural resources and similar issues is to mistake the complexity of the dynamic at play. Aceh Merdeka reflected the state's own obsessions, even as it rejected them. It was also a product and extension of the views about Aceh's special status that had been evolving in the territory since the 1950s.

Even more important, in statements such as the one from his "redeclaration," di Tiro and his supporters took inchoate grievances and explained them back to their audience by reference to a nationalist master narrative. According to this narrative, all ills were produced by Javanese dominance, and all could be remedied by independence. It is on this point that the analysis presented here of the genesis of Aceh's separatist rebellion differs somewhat from those approaches that emphasize grievances about state centralization, natural resources, and other issues as sources of the Aceh conflict or as catalysts

or accelerants in the crystallization of Acehnese identity. Rather than seeing grievances in this way, it is more helpful to reverse the lens and see the evolving framework of Acehnese identity as providing a prism through which natural resource exploitation and similar issues *could be interpreted in grievance terms*. To put it more bluntly, we might say that without the identity framework there would have been no grievances—at least no politically salient ones. Instead, people in Aceh may have viewed natural resource exploitation, political centralization, marginalization of Islam, and military high-handedness, as did people in most other provinces, as unfair and irritating but also as banal and unavoidable. In this view grievances are not trigger factors antecedent to the discourses that motivate violence. They are instead integral to the ideological frameworks, including notions of "justice" and "fairness," through which the social world is constructed and understood.

Conclusion: End of the Revolt

When it became aware of the new enemy in its midst, the Indonesian military launched an operation to eradicate it. By mid-1978, spokespeople were already claiming that the Aceh Merdeka movement was "scattered in small groups" (*Tempo*, July 15, 1978). Hasan di Tiro's account tracks his growing desperation as the military began to catch and kill his followers and close in on his own small band, attacking it several times. Eventually, in late 1978, about a year and a half after the group first announced its public presence, he fled back across the Malacca Strait. Husaini Hasan and a handful of others began to slip overseas about a year later, in late 1979 and early 1980. By this time communications were difficult, there had been few messages from Hasan di Tiro, and it was not even clear where he was. One by one the chief leaders of the movement were being hunted down. A few surrendered, including former USU students Asnawi Ali and Amir Ishak, who were released to their families after taking oaths of loyalty to the state (*Waspada*, March 22, 1980). On May 25, 1980, Zubir Mahmud, the young "minister for social affairs," was shot and killed when, according to some reports, one of his guards was followed after a football match (*Waspada*, May 29, 1980; Razali Abdullah, interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004); his brother Idris was captured two years later (*Waspada*, May 23, 1982). Muchtar Hasbi, a key founder of the movement, was killed in August 1980 (*Waspada*, August 15, 1980). In April 1982, Tengku Ilyas Leube, the charismatic *ulama* from central Aceh, was shot dead and his body was paraded before villagers in North Aceh (*Waspada*, April 20, 1982).

The first attempt to establish Aceh Merdeka had not been a great success. It had little military impact, and the reach of its propaganda was limited.

Many ordinary Acehnese recall the movement in those days as little more than a rumor in the hills; however, its emergence takes on greater significance in retrospect. Indeed, it is striking how those early days evoke an almost stereotypical picture of nationalist genesis: a small group of alienated intellectuals and a single charismatic figure engaged in an ambitious effort to refashion history in the service of their nationalist fantasy. They invoke memories of ancient ancestors and conjure a demonic, national enemy seeking to obliterate them as a race. Even di Tiro's diary references to German philosophers and his recollections of himself writing his tracts with European classical music ringing out in the still forest air seem to transport us back to the high period of nationalist awakening in nineteenth-century Europe.

Aceh Merdeka was more, therefore, than a reflexive manifestation of the grievances created by the New Order state. It picked out, explained, interpreted, and even *created* grievances in a new way. Never before had grievances been used to argue for Aceh's independence, and never before had the Acehnese been encouraged to view themselves as a unique nation, rigidly divided from their neighbors and traveling through history as the bearers of a special destiny. This proved to be a powerful message.

4

Rural and Global Networks

The Second Insurgency, 1982–1998

> It is like fear of a tiger and fear of a pig. . . . The people fear the rebels like a tiger, with respect for its strength, but they fear the army like a pig, with hatred for its filth.
>
> *Tengku Ahmad Dewi, Acehnese preacher (Pisani 1990)*

This chapter deals with the least-known period in GAM's history: the early 1980s to the late 1990s. After its establishment and disintegration in the 1970s, the movement appeared to go into abeyance. In the early 1980s there were few armed clashes or other signs of resistance. Officials were thus shocked by a sudden return of violent attacks in 1989. At first it was not clear who was behind the attacks. Officials denigrated those responsible as criminals involved in the *ganja* (marijuana) trade. It soon became apparent that this violence was a new incarnation of Aceh Merdeka. The military launched a vicious counter-insurgency campaign that dealt the movement another heavy blow and, by killing many civilians, greatly added to the store of Acehnese grievance.

Writers' understanding of this period has previously been hampered by lack of sources. Hasan di Tiro's idiosyncratic *Unfinished Diary* provides much information about the 1970s. There are many sources of information for after 1998, when GAM emerged into the open and was accessible to journalists, researchers, and others. By contrast, few sources throw light on the movement's inner workings in the 1980s and early 1990s. Hence, for example, Tim Kell's excellent 1995 study of the second round of GAM activity focuses mostly on the political and social conditions that gave rise to discontent rather than on the insurgency's internal dynamics. Geoffery Robinson's

(1998, 133) account likewise stresses "how the rise of Aceh Merdeka and the extreme violence after 1989 were related to changes in the broader economic and political environment."

This chapter provides a perspective that, although it draws on published sources, rests also on accounts by GAM members and sympathizers. It relates the experiences of people who tried to maintain and revive the movement within Aceh, and of those who directed and nourished it from outside. The story that emerges is one of a slowly reviving subterranean movement. By the late 1980s, a group of young men from a new generation felt ready to challenge the government by force of arms.

In the 1980s, the New Order regime seemed very powerful. In other Indonesian provinces there was little overt opposition; in Aceh the military had quickly destroyed the first attempt to revolt. How could the movement survive in such an inhospitable environment? In the story told in this chapter, two factors, at first glance worlds apart, helped to sustain GAM and its nationalist ideals, and to nurture its followers' willingness to use violent methods.

The first factor was the movement's ability to merge with the networks that crosscut Aceh's rural and small-town life and to draw strength from the cultural practices that underpinned that life. Ties of kinship and place were especially important, but the movement also based itself on a matrix of ideas and practices associated with folk religion and masculinity. If the previous chapter stressed the novelty of GAM's vision, this chapter illustrates how the movement was embedded in a local cultural and social context.

The second factor was the experience of exile. After the suppression of the movement in the late 1970s, a few of its leaders found refuge overseas. Later, after the greater military violence of the late 1980s and early 1990s, thousands of supporters followed suit. Exile had already helped shape Hasan di Tiro's nationalist vision. From the 1980s on, it became more important as participants in the movement found sanctuary in foreign lands, especially Malaysia and Libya.

The Leadership Vacuum

In the previous chapter, discussion of the context in which Aceh Merdeka emerged showed that a range of grievances were generated by the government's political and economic programs. In the 1980s and 1990s, these policies and grievances persisted. This section explains that GAM also grew because of the absence of other channels for expressing dissent over such issues. The bureaucratic state drew into its embrace, and neutralized, the territory's main

political elites. It created a vacuum of opposition that the counter-elite of GAM moved to fill.

By the mid-New Order period there were two chief sources of indigenous political authority in Aceh. The first source was the technocrats who, as discussed previously, dominated the civilian administration. They legitimated their role by referring to Acehnese "specialness," but increasingly they were obviously an appendage of the national government in Jakarta and were neither able to challenge it nor inclined to do so. The second source was the *ulama*. For much of the preceding century they had asserted their ability to lead the Acehnese. In mid-century they had been claimants to political authority in their own right. During the New Order, traces of these old ambitions remained, but the defeat of Darul Islam and the subsequent failure of the special territory compromise had led to marginalization. As Morris (1983, 302) observed during the period under discussion, "religious leaders began to turn to institutional pockets from which Islam could be defended, but this has remained pretty much a negative strategy."

Morris (1983, 302) also observed that at times "the ideal of realizing a revived and unified Islamic community appeared again." This was especially so during the five-yearly elections held by the regime to provide it with a veneer of electoral legitimacy. Many respected *ulama* in Aceh backed Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), the party created early in the New Order out of the surviving Islamic parties. In the late 1970s and the 1980s, PPP mounted a noisy but ineffectual populist Islamic challenge to the government throughout Indonesia. In Aceh, election campaigns were very tense, with many *ulama* pronouncing that those who supported Golkar were little better than *kafir*, and that supporting PPP was a religious obligation. In the 1977 elections, the party won 57 percent of the votes in Aceh, making it one of only two provinces (the other was Jakarta) where Golkar failed to win a majority. In 1982, Aceh was the only province to record such an outcome, with PPP winning 59 percent of the votes. To national government leaders, these results underlined Aceh's status as a troublesome and obdurate holdout against modernization policies. It also proved to be the last gasp of opposition expressed in a nationwide Islamic framework in Aceh.

One problem for PPP and other tolerated opposition was that the rules of the political game were weighted against them. For instance, the government constructed a barrier between electoral outcomes and executive office. Even after the 1977 election, PPP did not hold a majority in the provincial legislature because of the presence of six appointed military representatives (Kell 1995, 35). In addition, the president did not have to approve the legis-

lature's choice of governor; local assemblies could only propose candidates. Thus, in 1978, despite PPP's electoral victory the year before, another Golkar-nominated technocrat, Madjid Ibrahim, became governor. In Aceh, governors and *bupati* were always "the center's choice" (Kell 1995, 32); no candidate linked to PPP won office. The result was that "a vote for the PPP could never be more than a protest vote against the government" (Kell 1995, 41).

After a while, even the PPP's ability to garner a protest vote declined. From the 1970s onward, the government used the same inducements, threats, and occasional repression in Aceh that it used elsewhere to shepherd the *ulama* and their followers away from opposition. Many *ulama* and former PPP activists can recount experiences of arrest or harassment during the New Order years. The government also intervened in the party's internal affairs and required its leaders to compromise if they wanted to keep their positions. A fatal concession was when the party abandoned Islam as its "ideological foundation," thereby blunting the edge of its Islamic appeal throughout Indonesia and contributing to a precipitous drop in votes in the 1987 election.

Intimidation was accompanied by inducements. In the mid-1980s, governor Ibrahim Hasan invested much personal energy in the effort to strengthen links between the regional government and the *ulama*. He gave new funds to support religious schools and mosque development programs, paid for twenty to thirty *ulama* a year to make the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca, and made a concerted effort to Islamize the public image of Golkar. Years later, in explaining his motivations, he was quite frank: he had done these things so that the *ulama* would "obey us." Providing *ulama* with flights to Mecca was a "way to make them close; after that we would suggest that they support Golkar in the election campaign" (Ibrahim Hasan, interview with author, Jakarta, April 20, 2004). With such support, Golkar won an electoral victory in the province in 1987, making its sweep of the country complete.

The 1970s and 1980s were a period of transition during which the vestiges of the oppositional authority of the *ulama* were sometimes apparent. By the mid-1980s, however, a visiting scholar observed the following:

> At this time there is no Acehnese dissident with an all-Acehnese reputation. No figure like the Islamic preacher A. M. Fatwa or Gen. H. R. Dharsono [both associated with the Petition of Fifty dissident group in Jakarta] could be found in Aceh. Not much is left of the former warlike spirit in Aceh. In the New Order, the political influence of the Acehnese *ulama*s has declined to an all-time low. As an *ulama* told me, "It is not possible to do anything if you do not collaborate with the government." [Hiorth 1986b, 5]

The absence was also apparent in rural areas. Reports on Acehnese village life by Indonesian researchers in the mid-1970s point to a gulf between ordinary

villagers and government institutions. One observer (Somadisastra 1977, 93) found that officials of the rapidly expanding bureaucracy in one part of Aceh Besar were "having many difficulties" gaining authority in villages because they lacked locally legitimate status (villagers had the most respect for former Darul Islam leaders) and "could not penetrate traditional channels of communication so that they appear to lack opportunities to communicate with the informal leaders" (Somadisastra 1977, 93). Some community members believed that the contemporary leaders were worse than the *uleebalang* under the Dutch. Meanwhile, the co-optation of local figures meant that people were beginning to talk disparagingly of *keuchik Golkar* (Golkar village heads) and *imam Golkar* (Golkar prayer leaders) (Soeyatno 1977, 74). As the New Order state penetrated village society more deeply, it not only alienated local populations, but it also discredited their traditional leaders.

Nationalism and the Networks of Rural Life

Guree Rahman, who in the Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM, or Military Operations Zone) period (1990 to 1998) became legendary as GAM's commander for the Pase (North Aceh) district, recalls that his first knowledge of Aceh Merdeka came when he was about eleven years old, in 1976 or 1977. At that time his father was a timber merchant who would take a truck, chainsaws, and a few workers into the forest to collect wood. Rahman would often accompany him. One day Rahman's father took food and other supplies to a small camp not far from where he was cutting wood. Rahman recalls his early fascination with the group of men there and especially their guns: "Like all boys, I liked weapons very much." After this encounter, Rahman's father kept him home from school for two days so that in his excitement he would not tell his friends what he had seen. His brothers checked that he kept the secret. When they found he could be trusted, his father began to take him into the forest more often to meet the men. His father's job, he soon discovered, was to protect this group (Guree Rahman, interview with author, Stockholm, June 12, 2004).

Rahman wasn't sure how his father became involved but he knew his father was related to a man who had been Daud Beureueh's treasurer during Darul Islam. Soon Rahman learned that two of his older brothers were also involved in Aceh Merdeka. (Both were later killed by security forces.) One was a courier who carried money and letters around Pase. When Rahman was still in junior high school, his brother trained him as a courier. Wearing the short pants of his school uniform so as to avoid suspicion, he would carry letters and money for Ismail Taleb and Yusuf Abdullah, Aceh Merdeka regional commander and governor of Pase, respectively. Doing this work, he traveled

up and down the east coast, as far as Pidie to the northwest and Peureulak (East Aceh) to the south. Then, in about 1985, Rahman was appointed as an *ulee sagoe* (equivalent to a subdistrict head) in Lhoksukon. His job was mostly to hide people and to collect money on a small scale to provide for those in hiding. Everything was very secretive. By this time he was also taking money and letters to the top Aceh Merdeka commanders in the hills of Pidie, including 1976 veterans Keuchik Umar and Commander Rasyid.

As Rahman grew to adulthood, he also developed a close relationship with a well-known religious teacher and healer in Lhoksukon, Abu Hanan, a very old man and a relative of Rahman's father. Abu Hanan was a specialist in making traditional medicines from roots, barks, and other vegetable matter. He had made a long study of the natural world and was able to teach Rahman, for instance, which plants in the forest could be eaten, which were poisonous, and which leaves could be used to bandage wounds. This was a skill that Rahman later put to good use in the forest (although he was not always able to save his men as a result). Abu Hanan was also an expert in *ilmu falaq*, astronomy. He could predict the weather from the movement of the birds. He was also able to teach his students how to, for instance, resist pain and injury when holding a flame to themselves.[1]

Under Abu Hanan's tutelage, Rahman opened a coffee shop in town. He also founded a martial arts group. His aim, he said, was to hold meetings in his coffee shop without arousing suspicion. He even organized all-Aceh martial arts competitions, with the blessing of the local army command. He got the title *guree* (teacher) from his experiences running the martial arts group.

Few people knew about Guree Rahman's secret life, but several *ulama* in Lhoksukon did know, as did some of the "bandits, or young men there." This group formed a "Honda gang," or motorcycle gang (motorcycles are often known in Aceh by the name of the Japanese brand most popular there). Its members included sons of local police and army officers. They came in handy when people in the Aceh Merdeka network wanted, for instance, to use a motorcycle. Sometimes they were able to borrow one from the local military command. Rahman recalled that some members of the gang "knew that I was the enemy of their fathers." Most did not. Rahman was also related to the chief of police in Lhoksukon, through his mother's side of the family, so he could easily get information about what the security forces were up to by visiting the chief's house.

Finally, the security forces began to suspect that Rahman was involved in subversive activities. An informant betrayed him, and the military raided his shop in February 1988. He fled and joined Yusuf Ali, commander of the Pase district,

who had already gathered a number of newly returned trainees from Libya in a village close to the edge of the forest. Finding that they had few weapons, Guree Rahman gave them further martial arts training, teaching them how to use knives, swords, and their bare hands to fight, and how to seize weapons from adversaries. After about five months they were ready for their first major military engagements. It was from this time forward that the second round of Aceh Merdeka, described in detail in this chapter, began to make its mark.

Guree Rahman's story is illuminating in several respects. First, it reveals that the movement *did* survive, even during the early 1980s. In most accounts there was stark discontinuity between Aceh Merdeka in the 1970s and the subsequent armed resistance in the late 1980s. (Drexler 2008, 93, refers to a "critical disjuncture" between the two periods.) Conversations with people such as Guree Rahman have convinced me that a skeletal movement persisted during the years of apparent quiescence. In Pase, Peureulak, Pidie, and Batee Iliek (each roughly equivalent to a *kabupaten*, or district in the Indonesian system) there were territorial commanders (*panglima wilayah*) whose names are still remembered today. Under these commanders were the *panglima muda* (junior commanders), and lower still were the *panglima sagoe* and the *ulee sagoe*, each responsible for a number of villages. These commanders might be religious teachers, school teachers, or simply youths. The lower-level leaders usually did not know their fellows in neighboring regions and knew only those immediately above them. This system was designed to maintain secrecy. They also did not engage in much active subversion beyond occasional secret meetings, oath-taking ceremonies, smuggling of letters and money, and hiding fugitives. They did not attack the security forces. Beyond this formal structure were wider circles of people who had only fleeting or personal connections with the movement.

The second and broader significance of Guree Rahman's story is that it indicates how the movement grew. It suggests that a key to the resilience of Aceh Merdeka as an organized movement, and hence as an idea, was that it rested on what David Laitin (1995, 3), in writing about Basque nationalism, called "a micro foundation based upon social organization in rural and small-town life." Aceh Merdeka grew along the sinews and arteries that connected Acehnese society, especially its young men in the countryside and small towns. Ties of locality, kinship, and youthful masculine experience were central.

Aceh Merdeka grew organically in rural communities. Aceh in the 1970s and 1980s was fundamentally a rural society. In 1980 the population was still 91.1 percent rural, and 71.1 percent of the population was employed in agriculture; both figures were still well above the national average (Hill and Weidemann 1989, 14–15). The liquefied natural gas (LNG) fields around

Lhokseumawe and other economic modernization efforts were disrupting rural society, but this was not a society undergoing the alienation and anonymity caused by rapid urbanization. Most people still lived in close-knit rural communities and knew their neighbors well. Recruitment to the movement was not based on impersonal general appeals or mass shared political experience. Instead, it involved direct and secretive approaches by people one knew intimately.

Kinship ties were especially important. In Guree Rahman's case we see that involvement in the rebellion was approved by his father and another distant relative, and modeled by his brothers. The role of family ties was readily observable even at the birth of the movement. In the 1970s, military spokespeople denounced Aceh Merdeka as being based merely on family relations. Although Hasan di Tiro and other leaders denied this accusation, in his *Unfinished Diary* di Tiro recognizes that ties of family and place were important (see, for example, di Tiro 1984a, 29). Many of di Tiro's key allies were close relatives. His brother Zainal Abidin Tiro and his uncle Tgk Umar di Tiro connected Hasan to older Darul Islam veterans; two of his cousins, Muhammad Usman Lampoh Awe and Zaini Abdullah, joined the first Aceh Merdeka cabinet. Other key early leaders included pairs of brothers: Malik and Amir Rasyid Mahmud, Muchtar and Fauzi Hasbi, and Zubir and Idris Mahmud.

Bonds between fathers and sons and between brothers were crucial for the coherence of Aceh Merdeka over successive generations. As already noted, many early leaders felt they were continuing a struggle begun by their fathers during Darul Islam. Some joined with explicit endorsement by their fathers, others felt themselves to be avenging their fathers' violent deaths. This pattern was replicated over succeeding generations. Time and again during my research, when I asked active GAM members (as opposed to passive sympathizers) to describe how they became involved in the movement, they began by recalling an instruction given or an example set by a father, brother, uncle, or male cousin; or they described a desire to honor, imitate, or avenge some older male relative. Their stories often began when, as young children, they ran errands, smuggled messages, or acted as lookouts for GAM units in which their brothers or fathers were active. To cite a dramatic example: Tengku Bahri, a commander in Bireuen, was killed in late 2004 along with his brother; three other brothers had already been killed over the preceding years, leaving only one alive. There are many other stories of brothers recruited by brothers and of whole families of male siblings killed by security forces.

Once people were inducted into the movement, intermarriage was important for maintaining coherence. Fathers from GAM families often ensured that

their daughters married young men who were also involved, and such men sought wives from blue-blooded movement families. The result was an interlocking pattern of family relations in which men in the leadership of the movement were often connected, if not by blood then by marriage. By the late 1990s it was difficult to find a senior GAM figure without such ties. Widows of combatants also sometimes married the comrades of their slain husbands. In extreme cases, commanders who anticipated death in battle asked trusted comrades to care for their widows by marrying them. Cut Rostina, the daughter of a first-generation Aceh Merdeka leader and detainee, was the wife of Rahman Paloh, a famous commander for the Pase district in the DOM years. Rahman asked his close friend Ishak Daud to marry Rostina if he fell in battle. After Rahman was killed in 1997, Ishak, whose first wife and children remained in Malaysia, took Rostina as his second wife. She bore two children and in 2004, at the age of 24, was finally shot dead herself by security forces in an attack that also killed her second husband, by then one of GAM's most famous commanders.

The military understood that GAM was embedded in Acehnese society through family networks. The worst abuses meted out in attempts to uproot the insurgency were often directed at members' relatives. Thus, in the late 1970s, the authorities arrested and detained together in jail the wives, children, and other relatives of the key GAM leaders. Later, more brutal methods were used. For instance, at the height of the DOM period, troops were seeking Keuchik Umar, by now the most senior GAM commander in Aceh. They visited his village, took three of his sons, killed them in front of the villagers, and paraded their bodies through the district. Such stories are common. I have often heard accounts of troops burning houses or perpetrating torture, rape, and murder against known relatives of GAM fighters. Later, after the fall of Soeharto, the military and their civilian proxies often detained wives or other family members of known GAM leaders (see, for example, *Analisa*, July 21, 2003). Sometimes they would openly demand that the man they sought give himself up; other times profit was the motive and those detained would be released after payment of a fee.

A final aspect of the pattern of recruitment that Guree Rahman's story illuminates is the role of networks of young men for whom loyalty, honor, physical prowess, and risk taking were part of everyday cultural behavior. Observers have noted the strong sexual segregation that marks Acehnese society. Anthropologist James Siegel (1969, 152), who conducted fieldwork in Aceh in the 1960s, observed the following:

> At this age [puberty], boys are no longer seen with women. No Atjehnese man is ever seen with a woman who is not his wife for more than a minute or so. Men say that

> if they are seen with a woman, people will accuse them of having an affair. Atjehnese often said that this custom was "specific Atjeh," something peculiar to the Atjehnese. Even with old women, as well as with their own mothers and sisters, the boys limit themselves to the briefest possible exchanges and rush away.

From a young age, boys would sleep together in the *meunasah*, or village meeting house. Much anthropological interest has focused on the matrifocal element in Acehnese society, by which women occupied a central role in kinship structures and economic life (Siegel 1969, Jayawardena 1977, Siapno 2002). The flip side of matrifocality was the world of exclusively masculine experience. Young and sometimes older men would journey away from their home villages, in the practice known as *merantau*, to seek employment or trade or to attain education in an Islamic boarding school, or *dayah*, for months or years at a time. Even within the village or town, male socialization outside the home was with other men. A well-known Acehnese social institution is the coffee shop, or *kedai kopi*, where men gather to while away their time and discuss all manner of affairs, and where "debates often spiral into heated arguments, especially over emotionally charged issues, such as the central government's treatment of the Acehnese" (Afrida 2004, 4).

Aceh Merdeka grew in this masculine world. From the start it was almost exclusively a movement of men. As Jacqueline Siapno (2002, 4) notes, women have not been "as passionately inclined to joining the independence movement or enlisting to 'die for' the nation." Women were assigned support roles, such as provision of logistics, medical assistance, or hiding and smuggling male fighters. They did not assume leadership roles, and only rarely, if at all, participated directly in combat. Instead, Aceh Merdeka sustained itself through networks that connected men, especially young men. For example, as we shall see later, the intense bonds that developed while young men traveled, especially in Malaysia, often meant that friends joined the movement together and pledged to live or die together. Young men studying in the same rural *dayah* sometimes joined at the same time.

Young men active in networks where violence was already part of the normal "cultural repertoire" (borrowed from Laitin 1995, 14) were especially prominent in the movement, particularly during its greatest difficulties in the 1980s. Guree Rahman's involvement in martial arts was an example. Likewise, a number of men who were former or even serving military or police personnel became active in the insurgency in the late 1980s. (Of the fifty or so alleged Aceh Merdeka members tried by late 1992, ten were ex-soldiers or police: Robinson 1998, 149); indeed, the authorities at this time tended to blame much of the unrest on them. Others who became involved (but only in great numbers after

the collapse of the Soeharto regime) were *preman*, that is, petty criminals, gangsters, or small-town toughs like the members of Guree Rahman's Honda gang.

These recruitment patterns meant that during the 1980s the movement's leadership was transformed. Some of the intellectuals who had founded Aceh Merdeka still tried to lead it from exile. There were still sympathizers in the urban elite, as indicated by subversion trials in the early 1990s, when university lecturers, businessmen, and even local politicians were convicted of attending clandestine meetings (Kell 1995, 69). But such people were now peripheral. Overall, the active leadership moved outward from the towns into the countryside, and downward from older urban elites toward younger, tougher men whose personal experiences, temperaments, and skills were best suited to underground and insurgent methods. The middle classes gave little support. Nor did Aceh Merdeka appeal much to the urban poor, a group that was small in Aceh. It was marked off, therefore, from the puritanical Islamist movements that existed elsewhere in the Islamic world in the 1980s, which derived their sustenance from the alienation generated by rapid urbanization and existed "in symbiosis with the urban environment" (Roy 1996, 4). Economic modernization and its attendant disruption played a part in generating support for Aceh Merdeka, but the movement was led mostly by men with at least one foot planted firmly in the soil of the village.

Indeed, it is worth noting that many GAM commanders insist that it was precisely in the *most* remote and backward villages, which were not reachable by paved roads, electricity, or other modern services, that they and their views were received most readily. They deny that GAM found it easier to recruit in areas that were closer to modern industry. Guree Rahman, for example, when pressed on the coast, retreated to the mountains of West Aceh, where he found a safe refuge and an enthusiastic audience. Another GAM fighter said that when the movement began to reestablish itself in Bireuen, much later in 1998, they began to spread the word first in the south, near the mountains. It was always people in the interior, closest to the mountains, who were the strongest supporters: "It's in the isolated areas that the Acehnese stick together the most and believe most strongly in each other. They are all locals. It was never near the main roads that our support was strongest. That is because near to the roads there are lots of newcomers; we don't know their origins" (Tgk Ahmad Langat, interview with author, North Aceh, August 21, 2006).

Tom Nairn (1997, 106) argues that nationalist violence is especially likely in countries that are undergoing rapid modernization where "peasant rurality has been close, recent, still accessible to the people undergoing 'nationalisation,' and therefore, still capable of infusing violent personal or familial emo-

tions into its language and rhetoric."[2] In Aceh, even the intellectual elite who founded the movement were not far removed from rural life. Hasan di Tiro expresses in his writings plenty of nostalgia for his bucolic childhood, and the main room of Husaini Hasan's home in Stockholm is decorated with a portrait of his family home in rural Aceh, set amid verdant rice fields with a backdrop of distant mountains. For the second generation of leaders who stepped forward to lead the insurgency in the late 1980s, rurality was more than a precious memory; it was daily reality.

The rural and small-town roots of the movement help explain much about it. In contrast to contemporaneous Islamist movements, for instance, with their "third worldist" message of social liberation tailored to the desires of the urban poor, Aceh Merdeka strikingly lacked anything resembling a social program. Its documents promised prosperity after independence, but lacked specifics. There was no mention of land reform, nationalization, or populist economics. Aceh Merdeka was unreflective about Acehnese society, providing no analysis of it beyond a bifurcation between a few "traitors" and the rest. The ethnonationalist vision, with its emphasis on blood ties binding the Acehnese, was vividly real for many of the movement's supporters because it was a scaled-up version of the closely knit rural communities from whence they came, and where many of them still lived. For many of them, the struggle for national liberation was not merely an imagined kinship but a real and direct kinship in which they were fighting alongside relatives and others to whom they had been close all their lives.

Culture, Violence, Resonance

The preceding chapter stressed the novelty of the Aceh Merdeka message, and how Hasan di Tiro and other leaders of the group fashioned an innovative nationalist vision. A problem faced by such constructivist accounts of national identity, especially those that emphasize the role of elites, is the question of *resonance*. As Fearon and Laitin (2000, 868) put it, "Accounts that focus on elites to some extent beg the question of why the masses follow." Why is it that the followers see something attractive and worth identifying with in the nationalist vision? This is especially the case in movements that use violence, and in which the costs of participation can be high.

Describing the political context and the societal threads along which Aceh Merdeka formed helps to answer the question, but we also need to understand the cultural context that allowed some young men to find not only Aceh Merdeka's message but also its violent strategy so appealing. This section therefore emphasizes how that message and strategy resonated with elements

of preexisting ideologies and aspects of daily cultural repertoire in Aceh. In particular, I focus on ideas about *jihad* through which resistance to outside forces had been expressed since the nineteenth century, certain folk Islamic traditions, and concepts of honor in rural Acehnese society.

Bruce Kapferer famously analyzed the cultural roots of violent Sinhalese nationalism in Sri Lanka. The "demonic fury" of anti-Tamil riots reminded him of his earlier studies of exorcism and sorcery in Sinhalese Buddhism, leading him to emphasize the "mythic ontology" permeating the language of Sinhalese nationalists. He argued that "in myth and ritual the powerful metaphors and symbols of the state, a state in mythic time, are engaged to return to a condition of healthy wholeness, the fragmented body attacked by demons" (Kapferer 1988, 100; see also discussion in Fearon and Laitin 2000). In such circumstances, threats to the state by those positioned ontologically as foreign could give rise to intense and personal reactions such that violent Sinhalese attacks on Tamils "may be likened to a giant exorcism" (101).

In Aceh we see a parallel to the Sinhalese Buddhist myths in the popular literature of holy war that appeared in the nineteenth-century war against the Dutch. As we have seen, the *hikayat prang sabi* divided the world into *kafir* and believers, and stressed the duty of all Muslims to answer the call to *jihad*, and the rewards of martyrdom for those who did so. The *hikayat prang sabi* was a product of the war with the Dutch, but it obviously also drew on a wider religious framework that retained currency.

In contrast to Kapferer, who has been criticized for being ahistorical by making a leap "from a cosmology inferred from a sixth-century mytho-historical text . . . to another cosmology he infers from present-day demon rituals" (Tambiah 1992, 171; cited in Fearon and Laitin 2000, 861), the analysis presented here stresses that the framework of *jihad* was compelling for many Acehnese young men because of recent historical experience. It had survived through the Dutch period, with Governor van Sluys of Aceh and its dependencies warning in 1923 that "the war-tales of the elders are still handed down by them to the rising generation" (Langhout 1924, vi–vii). Dutch administrators ordered that copies of the *hikayat prang sabi* be burned (Alfian 2006, 114). Even so, the call to *jihad* was once again a powerful motivating force during the Indonesian national revolution, partly because the bifurcation of protagonists into Muslim fighters and *kafir* could easily be grafted onto the new nationalist way of viewing the world. The call was reawakened during Darul Islam when Acehnese *ulama* called for a violent struggle with the slogan "martyrdom or victory" and denigrated their opponents as *kafir* and apostates. The army issued a handbook to soldiers serving in the province that warned that the *hikayat* could be a "bad

influence" because it stimulated the belief of "the majority of the fanatical Acehnese people" that martyrdom was "a way to purchase entrance to heaven and happiness in the afterlife" (Penerangan Daerah Militar Aceh/Iskandarmuda 1960, 49–51).

Many participants in Aceh Merdeka, as previously stressed, had joined Darul Islam or were children of those who had. For them, the call to *jihad* and martyrdom remained meaningful. Even though the popularity of the *hikayat prang sabi* was declining, it was still occasionally recited by older folk in rural districts. Moreover, these ideas lived on in other ways. For instance, Jacqueline Siapno (2002, 146) records versions of children's lullabies through which "Acehnese children are taught not only about Islamic values but about a war that is being fought to 'defend their country.'"

In GAM literature it is easy to find evidence of a cult of martyrdom that extends the old ideology. Many of Hasan di Tiro's own writings have an almost morbid fascination with death. Although by the late 1990s GAM members were reluctant to describe their struggle as a *jihad* (see Chapter 7), they did regularly celebrate each battle death as an instance of martyrdom. For instance, in the immediate post-Soeharto period, the commander of GAM's armed forces, Abdullah Syafi'ie, was popularly reputed to have a kind of hunger for martyrdom, and it was posthumously said that he had predicted he would fall in battle when Aceh's independence was imminent. A GAM statement released after his death in January 2002 asked people to pray that God would reward him and other martyrs and concluded with the slogan, "May we live as equal and die together, wrapped in a single sheet and buried in a single grave."

However, Aceh Merdeka also transformed ideas about jihad and martyrdom to accord with nationalist logic. Take, for example, the following sentences from Luth Ari Linge's 1993 book *Malapetaka di Bumi Sumatra* (Calamity in the land of Sumatra):

> There are many reasons why we must remember the service of the *syuhada* [martyrs] in Aceh (for whom there is insufficient room here to name one by one). To the present the blood of the *syuhada* continues to flow without cease, continually transfusing fresh blood into the veins of our nation. Each nation will be renowned as glorious for the amount of blood that is spilled for its holy independence struggle. [61–62][3]

Linge (1993, 79) believes these martyrs to be dying in defense of God's religion and that "war against colonialism is war [in answer to] the call of faith." What is striking, however, is not the continued use of religious terminology about martyrdom but its transposition onto a nationalist framework. Immortality is achieved through martyrdom, though not in an afterlife for the individual

(which is not denied but is not elaborated on as it was in the earlier holy war literature) but in the infusion of the martyrs' blood into the eternal and undying Acehnese nation.[4]

In Chapter 7 I return to the role played by religion in GAM's struggle. Here it is sufficient to note that Free Aceh discourse was typical of the nationalism that occurs in many other places; old religious terminology permeates the new discourse and accounts for much of its vehemence and affective power. Thus GAM leaders frequently condemned "national traitors" in passionate terms that echoed earlier attacks on apostates who collaborated with *kafir*. Likewise, Hasan di Tiro speaks of Aceh as a "holy land." Indeed, it is not only the language and spirit of the Islamic worldview that are absorbed, but also some of the key cultural artifacts of the earlier Islamic struggle. Consider, for example, the fate of the *hikayat prang sabi* itself. This epic tale was taken up as a kind of anthem by Aceh Merdeka fighters, who would sing it at secret meetings and in exile. Sometimes they would replace phrases in the original, such as *Dutch infidels*, with modern equivalents such as *Javanese spies* to make it clear that their goals and enemies were now national and not only religious.

Still, talk about the ideology of *jihad* as a motivation for youths to participate in GAM's violent struggle has an abstract and impersonal air to it. Look at the part played by Abu Hanan in Guree Rahman's narrative presented earlier. In this account, Abu Hanan appears not as an austere expert on Islamic jurisprudence or the rules of jihad but as a devout man possessed of esoteric and mystical skills. GAM recruits undoubtedly learned about the duties of *jihad* from their elders, but they also drew inspiration from a range of practices and beliefs associated with popular Islam.

To illustrate the point, it is worth considering other social discontent and antigovernment preaching that coincided with the reemergence of Aceh Merdeka in the 1980s. Some preachers endorsed Aceh Merdeka ideas without having organizational ties to the movement. Tengku Ahmad Dewi, for example, was a popular preacher on the east coast. Trained at an esteemed traditionalist *dayah* in Samalanga, he drew huge crowds with his entertaining personal style (he interspersed his sermons with jokes, dressed like a cowboy, and wore his hair long) and his fierce denunciations of government injustice. Many people recall that he implied support for Aceh's independence in his sermons, although he also criticized GAM. Eventually he was killed, according to a story in wide circulation, when his brother was arrested and taken to a military post. When he visited the post, the soldiers tied Ahmad Dewi himself to a tree and crushed him with a vehicle—because it was believed he was invulnerable to lesser weapons. One of Ahmad Dewi's former students was Tengku Abdurrah-

man Budiman BTM.[5] In 1989, at the age of twenty-seven, he was arrested and imprisoned for subversion. The national news magazine *Tempo* (August 26, 1989, 46–47) explained that the arrest had occurred after an open-air sermon before ten thousand people for which he dressed in "a multicolored robe, red, yellow, green, black" with, at his waist, "a 40cm sword, hanging entwined in a sarung, which he frequently stroked." He opened his sermon, after the standard prayer, by waving his sword and crying "Aceh Merdeka" three times. In an interview much later, Tengku Abdurrahman agreed that he had shouted his support for Aceh Merdeka, but he insisted he had no links to the movement. Instead, he had shared Tengku Ahmad Dewi's opposition to injustice. Both of them, he said, used to preach about such matters as the LNG industry, which produced huge profits amid poverty, and the government's policy of enforcing Pancasila as the philosophical basis for Islamic organizations (interview with author, Banda Aceh, February 23, 2007).

Some of the Islamic discontent of the 1980s involved more heterodox practices. A dramatic example was the "white robe movement" led by Sufi *ulama* Teungku Bantaqiah from Beutong Ateuh, a remote valley in West Aceh. Bantaqiah came to prominence when some of his followers, dressed in white robes and carrying swords, marched along rural roads enjoining people to return to *shari'a*. A number of teachers from the Beutong Ateuh area were famed for their mystical skills, including the ability to become invisible, change into animal form, and be invulnerable to bullets and blades (Ishak 2003, 36). Bantaqiah himself was widely believed to have some of these skills, and he had other unorthodox beliefs. "He claimed that his followers had no need to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca because the well he had dug at his religious school flowed from the holy well of Zamzam in Mecca" (Jones 1997, 10). Such beliefs put him in conflict with Aceh's religious authorities; the Ulama Council declared his beliefs deviant and prohibited their practice. Bantaqiah was not involved in GAM, but several GAM members recall guerillas setting up camp near his *dayah* and giving paramilitary training to villagers there. Some GAM recruits themselves went to his school to learn *ilmu* (esoteric knowledge, magical powers) from him. Eventually, in 1993, Bantaqiah was accused of supplying logistics to Guree Rahman; he was arrested, tried, and imprisoned for subversion. He was released in April 1999 as part of the amnesty given to all political prisoners by President B. J. Habibie, but in July he was killed along with fifty-six of his followers in one of the more notorious military massacres of 1999 (Zamzami 2001, Ishak 2003). The soldiers, who apparently believed the stories of Bantaqiah's invulnerability, used high-powered weapons and explosives to kill him.

These stories draw attention to a range of mystical practices that flourished in rural Aceh, inspiring people who wanted to resist the state, despite the efforts of successive generations of Islamic reformers to wipe them out. Belief in invulnerability, protective amulets, and shape changing—and martial arts that adopt these practices—are not confined to Aceh but have appeared in many, perhaps all, instances of rural warfare and rebellion throughout Southeast Asia (see, for example, McKenna 1998, 192). Many GAM members became involved in the movement when they set out to learn about *ilmu* from respected older men. Legends abounded about particular GAM leaders who were reputed to possess extraordinary skills. Teungku Ilyas Leube, for instance, was supposed to be able to disguise himself at will and so deceive his enemies (Jenkins 1980, 41). Stories later circulated that GAM's top commander, Abdullah Syafi'ie, possessed magical skills and talismans that enabled him to disappear at will and be invulnerable to bullets. As an article in *Serambi Indonesia* (January 24, 2002) explained when he was eventually killed by troops (also with high-powered weaponry):

> From various pieces of evidence found by the security forces at the scene it cannot be denied that he indeed possessed *jimat* [talismans]. But although he had *jimat*, Allah is All-Powerful and not a single child of humanity can succeed in opposing Him. Many people have asked about the *jimat* that are now being held in the safe keeping of the security forces as evidence. Is it true that they have a mysterious power that can make somebody disappear from sight or which can conquer foes? All of that is now a mystery, because their user is no more.

By the late 1990s, some GAM leaders were embarrassed about such beliefs, at least when discussing them with a foreign researcher. One man described them to me as arising from "structural backwardness and poverty" produced by decades of Indonesian dominance (Tk. Kamaruzzaman, interview with author, Banda Aceh, June 9, 2002). Most former GAM combatants, however, were very matter-of-fact about such beliefs, and although they did not always claim to know personally anyone who had such skills, they believed that such people did exist among fighters. Some former fighters put great store in esoteric knowledge and special talismans and could expound on them at great length and with some enthusiasm. Others who were not especially awed by them have suggested that invulnerability was real but came in the heat of battle when one "remembered the Creator" (Asnawi bin Jalil and Umar bin Rusli, interview with the author, Langsa, November 14, 2007). Another commonly held view was that invulnerability was good only as long as it lasted; that is, if a man with powers of invulnerability was unlucky or was fated to die, he would still be pierced by bullets. (People often laughed when giving this explana-

tion.) Even so, the ubiquity of such beliefs helps account for GAM's mystique and for the tenacity of its grip in rural Acehnese society.[6]

Finally, GAM was also able to draw on a third, and deeper, set of cultural resources: the beliefs and practices associated with honor that suffused the rural world where the movement grew. Many Acehnese nationalists insisted that their rebellion was a faithful realization of deeper cultural traits. They usually explained this first by referring to the history of resistance to outsiders and, as one old Acehnese man in Malaysia put it, to the *jiwa pemberontak* (spirit of rebellion) they inherited from earlier generations. Many, however, also spoke about the Acehnese stress on honor in daily life and their quickness to anger when social codes are broken. During fieldwork I have often been regaled with stories about the tough life of the Acehnese trader, about a society where a man's word is his bond, where his good name is everything, and where knives are drawn rather than an insult suffered. In discussions like this a phrase one often hears is that the Acehnese are *keras*, or hard.[7] Some even speak about how the Acehnese "enjoy war."

It is obviously problematic to draw one's understandings of everyday cultural practice from statements made by ethnonationalists while justifying their violent strategy. Nevertheless, a few ethnographic studies of rural Acehnese society from around the time of the birth of Aceh Merdeka confirm the picture of a social world that fostered strong codes of honor and violent sanctions. One study of "social control in Aceh Besar" (Soeyatno 1977) depicts villagers living in close social proximity and continually policing each other's behavior. It is a world in which children are believed to inherit the bad traits of their parents, and young people who disrespect their elders might be ostracized. Sexual fidelity and modesty are guarded jealously. Husbands who kill their adulterous wives in jealous rages are considered justified: "The community considers such actions by the husband as being 'manly,' indeed they deeply regretted why he did not kill both wrongdoers" (Soeyatno 1977, 109). Shameful acts that afflict a family are avenged by relatives who take the law into their own hands, including by murder.

Critics may see this discussion as conceding too much to primordialist analysis. Most recent scholarship on Aceh carefully avoids essentializing Acehnese culture or describing it as a source of violence. Scholars such as Kell (1995), Robinson (1998), Siapno (2002), and Drexler (2008) instead stress context, especially state actions prompting grievance, and some of them expressly deny that Acehnese culture was a source of violent resistance. Their reticence is partly because they are sensitive about depictions of Aceh as intrinsically violent that have been used to justify repression. Such characterization began

in the colonial period, when Dutch war reporting and sociology presented the Acehnese as backward, piratical, and fanatical. In some Western representations the Acehnese were (to quote the *Chicago Daily Tribune* of July 10, 1904) the "most bloodthirsty people in the world." A view of the Acehnese as fierce and obdurate eventually found its way into official Indonesian accounts so that, as has already been noted, even Acehnese officials spoke of the need to overcome their society's fanaticism. Army commanders and ordinary soldiers also had this view, and they used it to justify their violent behavior.

It is not my intent here to disagree with such objections. It is a mistake to conceive of culture as though it is a pristine substratum underlying history, untouched and unaffected by it. Codes of honor, association of manhood with martial prowess, and mystical beliefs about invulnerability also were not the defining features of Acehnese culture, nor were they more prevalent than cultural resources legitimating conciliation and compromise. Such cultural features were also present in other parts of Indonesia, in places with and without armed conflict.

Clearly "path dependency" was important. Had Aceh's relations with the Indonesian state been less troubled from 1945 to 1949 there would not have been the subsequent violent resistance. Thus, although it is important not to see culture as having a determining role in the initiation of conflict, it is also important not to ignore the effects that a long history of conflict may have on cultural expression and self-representation, and thus in shaping conflict when it does recur. The vivid memories of the ideology of *jihad*, and the salience of those memories for many Acehnese young men, were themselves products of the history that gave birth to the Darul Islam revolt in the 1950s, and before that, to the conflict with the Dutch. John McCarthy (2007) has written that this history produced a "habitus of violence" in which "violence has enjoyed a particular legitimacy in the pursuit of socio-political ends." Likewise, William Nessen (2006) writes of the Acehnese as having a "martial tradition." Here a relevant comparison might be with such groups as the Sikhs of India, for whom ideas about a warrior tradition have arisen out of a series of historical conflicts and become a resource for ethnonationalist mobilizations when conditions are ripe for it (Pettigrew 1995, Mahmood 1996).

In addition, a key innovation of Aceh Merdeka was to take up cultural practices that justify violence that had previously been known only in daily lived experience and weave them into a nationalist ideology and program for action. Just as Aceh Merdeka created a new Acehnese identity from the detritus of earlier modes of imagining social identity, it also drew on living cultural practices to make meaningful the call to violent resistance.

Exile and Libya

The preceding discussion suggests that Aceh's nationalist insurgency was parochial, even rustic, embedded as it was in village life. In fact, Acehnese nationalism was equally influenced by the international context. It fused local and global influences.

In an oft-cited passage from *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983, 57) argues that the "bureaucratic pilgrimages" of functionaries in the European absolutist states and in the Latin American colonies helped to foster a "consciousness of connectedness" that laid the ground for national belonging. A feature of anticolonial and minority nationalisms in the age of self-determination is the role played by *international* journeys that foster a sense not of fraternity but of difference from the journeyers' surroundings. In the early twentieth century, Southeast Asians such as Ho Chi Minh and Mohammad Hatta traveled to the heartland of empire—Europe. Their experiences shaped their views and influenced the course of nationalist struggles in their homelands. After World War II, in the age of the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations, international sojourns of third-world intellectuals were equally important in the genesis of minority nationalisms. Later still, an age of globalization and mass movements of the formerly colonized to postcolonial metropoles provided the context for a "long-distance nationalism" imprinted with the intense longings and ossified nativism of exile (Anderson 1992).

In Aceh's case, international sojourns and exile were also central. We have already seen that Hasan di Tiro's experiences in New York City, which was at the heart of both the evolving nation-state system and the Cold War, were key to his emerging nationalist imagination in the 1950s and 1960s. But the impact of exile went far beyond him alone. As a society that had been both maritime and mercantile, Aceh had long been outward looking. During its early modern golden age, it was intimately connected to the wider Malay world and looked to the great Islamic empires further west for its models. The sultanate had contacts with European powers and not only received traders and emissaries from them but also sent its own to European courts. In the nineteenth century, despite Aceh's decline, the pepper trade still connected Aceh to the outside world. American and other trading ships visited, and there was lively intercourse with Penang and other trading ports on peninsular Malaysia. When the Dutch invaded, the Acehnese appealed not only to the Ottomans but also to the United States and European powers for assistance and recognition (Reid 1969).

These past connections were widely known by late twentieth-century nationalists, who celebrated them as part of Aceh's former greatness. Hence, the

flag that Hasan designed for the Free Aceh movement (a white crescent moon and star on a red background broken by horizontal black and white stripes) was derived from earlier Acehnese prototypes that were in turn based on Ottoman models.[8] In contrast to the view of government technocrats that Aceh was a place of insularity and mental isolation, the nationalist mythology was that Aceh had always been an international crossroads, and that the Acehnese were by nature open to foreign influence. By the late 1990s, Acehnese nationalists said it was Indonesia that was responsible for Aceh's decline and that Aceh would be able to reclaim its openness to the outside world only if it became independent.

Even so, Aceh Merdeka's early overseas links were rudimentary. Hasan di Tiro's international experiences were exceptional. The main links that the movement had were in the Acehnese communities in Malaysia and Singapore (see later discussion on Malaysia in this chapter), but not further afield. When Aceh Merdeka was first formed, there were rumors about foreign support, with some press reports in 1977 through 1979 speculating that it had Libyan backing or was about to gain it. In fact, there was no such support. When Hasan di Tiro and the others fled Aceh in the late 1970s, they were ill-prepared and lacked foreign supporters. Di Tiro himself made his way to Singapore but was unable to reactivate his old connections in the United States. Instead he led an itinerant life. Details of his movements in the early 1980s are sketchy. For a while he was in Africa. When Husaini Hasan fled by boat a year later, he had even worse luck. He recalls arriving in Malaysia with only one U.S. dollar. When he went to a home where di Tiro had said he could seek aid, the owner angrily shut the door on him. Lacking papers, he approached the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and took refugee status with Sweden, the first country that offered it (interview with author, Stockholm, June 13, 2004).

Other leaders of the movement, including Hasan di Tiro, and their family members followed Husaini Hasan to Sweden. By the mid-1980s there was a community of a few dozen Acehnese in that country. Their first years were difficult; they recall suffering culture shock, hating the climate, having little money, not knowing the language, and being politically and socially isolated. Luckily for them, their number included professionals (Husaini Hasan and Zaini Abdullah were doctors) who could secure employment. They also slowly made contact with some Islamic and human rights groups scattered across Europe, and visited exiled East Timorese, West Papuan, and South Moluccan nationalists elsewhere (especially in Holland).

Over the following fifteen years the Acehnese diaspora continued to grow, especially after renewed violence in the territory in the 1990s. By the mid-

1990s a community of perhaps a few hundred was in Sweden. Others were in Norway, Denmark, and other European countries. By later in the decade, similar numbers were found in such places as Sydney, Australia, and scattered throughout the United States. These communities became hives of political activity; their members networked, published, and lobbied, trying to influence their host societies and governments to support the Acehnese cause, and they provided moral and logistical support to insurgents back home. The views they had about Aceh took on the romanticized tint of exile, and their understanding of Indonesian political dynamics became divorced from reality.

Exile became the heartland of ideological production of Acehnese nationalism. The chief leaders stayed in Sweden, from where they tried to direct the insurgency back home. The irregular bulletins produced in Europe and Malaysia and smuggled back into Aceh during the 1980s were by the late 1990s replaced by Free Aceh web sites that registered thousands of hits, and lively e-mail discussion bulletins through which exiled leaders communicated directly with activists and supporters back in Aceh. As in many intensely politicized exile communities, the diaspora was rent by splits and personal enmities that became so severe by the late 1990s that they resulted in fratricidal killings in Malaysia.

But we are running ahead of ourselves. In the mid-1980s there were still only a few refugees in Sweden. While coping with the challenges of deracination, they began to seek aid for their struggle, and in 1981–1985 they visited the embassies of countries likely to help. A breakthrough came around 1985 when Hasan di Tiro met the Libyan ambassador to Sweden, an old acquaintance from his business days. Within about a week, permission was arranged for Hasan di Tiro, along with Zaini Abdullah, to visit Libya.

Libya was then supporting many third-world revolutionary movements. Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi, who had taken power in 1969, developed a political vision that combined elements of Arab nationalism, socialism, and his own "idiosyncratic interpretation of Islam and the world" (Esposito 1984, 160). This vision was encapsulated in his *Green Book*, which explained his "Third International Theory" and suggested that the "national factor" was the "driving force of human history" (Anderson 1983, 142). Beginning in the early 1980s, his Mathaba Against Imperialism, Racism, Zionism and Fascism supported groups ranging from the Irish Republican Army to the United Kanak Liberation Front of New Caledonia, as well as many African and Latin American guerilla movements.

Hasan di Tiro became the chairperson of the political committee of the Mathaba. As he explained, the organization was "the Libyan way of supporting

liberation movements, either morally or financially, depending on the situation but not militarily" (*Pacific Islands Monthly*, June 1988, 18). In two speeches that di Tiro made at Mathaba meetings in Libya he gave florid praise to "the great leader of Al Fateh revolution" and the "legendary revolutionary nation" of Libya and condemned attacks against it by the common enemy, "American Imperialism and Zionism" (di Tiro 1986, 2). Yet amid the hyperbole it was obvious that this was an alliance of opportunity. As di Tiro put it in one of his speeches, participants in the Mathaba were pleased to be in Libya "because we have friends here as nowhere in the world" (di Tiro n.d., 1). He wasted little time in the speeches before getting to his chief interest: Aceh's glorious history and the iniquities of "Javanese colonialism." Some Aceh Merdeka members who went to Libya laugh when they recall that a few of their number were sent to study the *Green Book*. None of them took it seriously and none thought it realistic (Daud Paneuk, interview with author, Stockholm, July 12, 2002).

It is unclear whether Libya provided the movement with much money; it does seem clear that it did not provide weapons. It did, however, provide one thing that was sorely needed: a sanctuary in which to train recruits. Between 1986 and 1989 or 1990 (sources disagree over the exact date), Libya provided facilities and instructors for military and political training in a camp not far from Tripoli. The total number of young Acehnese men who went through Libyan training is controversial. Most people I have interviewed who were involved as recruiters and trainers put the total at two thousand; others say one thousand; press reports drawing on Indonesian military estimates typically say six hundred to eight hundred. It is difficult to square the larger figures with average class sizes over only three or four years, and it seems likely that the actual figure was around a thousand or slightly less. Whatever the actual numbers, this experience had a great impact.

The first group of forty-two young men arrived in Tripoli in April 1986, about a week after the United States bombed the capital. All of them had been recruited in Malaysia, where most of them had worked as petty traders. Among their number were some who later became famous field commanders of GAM's armed forces. For the second and later cohorts, emphasis was on recruiting directly from Aceh itself. Aceh Merdeka's surviving structure in Aceh was activated to find recruits. To recruit the second cohort, the Pase area, for example, was divided into four areas, the goal being to recruit ten trainees from each region. Transportation costs were funded by collecting money internally, and family members of recruits also contributed. In the end, about forty young men, some already holding junior leadership posts, were collected from the Pase area and sent to Malaysia, and from there to Libya.[9]

Young men were chosen for training in ways that reflected the recruitment patterns already discussed. Family ties were important. Some graduates of the Libyan training recall that their first inkling that they would be sent to Libya came when their fathers asked them if they wished to "go overseas" to "study." Malik Mahmud claims that when he was in Singapore, young Acehnese would arrive at his door, often bringing letters from their fathers addressed to Hasan di Tiro offering their sons as contribution to the struggle. In the strict "screening" process (it was especially strict early on), the key was that potential recruits had to have formal endorsement in a letter from someone who knew and could vouch for them, usually a relative.

Each trainee spent at least six months in Libya, some a year or eighteen months. They lived in their own barracks within a larger complex about fifteen to twenty minutes away from Tripoli. The complex also housed participants from other liberation movements. The Acehnese, however, did not mix much with the other groups, except other Muslim Southeast Asians. Each contingent had its own program, trainers, and commanders. At times there were tensions with some of the others; once there was almost a clash with Charles Taylor's group of Liberians. Recruits underwent military training in the daytime. In the following years, incredible rumors spread in Aceh about the content of the training (for example, it was popularly believed that a later GAM military commander, Muzakkir Manaf, had learned how to pilot helicopters and jet planes). In fact, training was modest, consisting mostly of learning to use small arms and engage in hand-to-hand combat, building physical endurance, and the like. Initially the trainers were Libyans and a few Aceh Merdeka veterans. Some of the more talented recruits became instructors for later recruits. In the evenings there was ideological training and English lessons. For the first group, Hasan di Tiro himself led the classes. As Daud Paneuk, who stayed several years in Libya, put it, the chief purpose was "to restore their sense of Acehnese superiority; to get rid of all their doubts concerning their own nation, especially those who were already products of the Indonesian education system" (interview with author, Stockholm, July 12, 2002). Recruits were also trained in propaganda techniques, especially how to be effective orators when they returned to their villages.

Eventually, in response to intensified U.S. and other Western pressure after the end of the Cold War, Libya closed its training program for foreign revolutionaries. Although it lasted only a few years, the Acehnese who were involved as instructors or as trainees have expressed great satisfaction with the Libyan experience. It generated intense fraternity among participants, partly because they were thrown together in close quarters with little contact with

the surrounding social environment. Libyan-trained fighters went on to be main leaders of the military struggle inside Aceh, both in the early 1990s and a decade later.

GAM's First Resurrection

At the end of the 1980s there was a period of quiet Aceh Merdeka reconsolidation, followed by a series of armed attacks. This was a revival of the movement of the 1970s, but with some discontinuity. Leadership in the field was passing to a new generation. Aceh's independence struggle became above all a war of young men, and it had a new aggressiveness and urgency.

The unrest came after a long and palpable buildup in rural Aceh. Leon Jones, an Australian development worker who in 1989 and 1990 was living in the Pidie district, recalls that the first signs of trouble were rumors of secret meetings in mosques and whispered discussions of grievances (Jones 1997, 1–3). There was mounting anticipation: "Right through 1989, well before the serious violence broke out in 1990, Aceh Merdeka and Hasan Tiro were everyday topics of conversation amongst the locals" (Jones 1997, 3). Jones was puzzled by the enthusiasm that such rumors generated, but he recognized that many ordinary people and most students at the campus where he worked supported Aceh Merdeka and its independence goal. When violent attacks began there was a widespread sense that something long awaited was finally beginning. "It's started," was how one of his friends put it (Jones 1997, 3).

Before proceeding, a caveat is important. It is not my intention in the following pages to exaggerate the size, coherence, or influence of Aceh Merdeka in the period under discussion. Contemporary accounts in the Indonesian and international press emphasize its messiness and mystery, and some later scholars emphasize possible military manipulation (see especially Drexler 2008). Some expressions of unrest, such as the Islamic preaching of individuals such as Ahmad Dewi, and a series of attacks on alleged "dens of vice," were not linked to the insurgency, or were linked only loosely. In retrospect, however, it is clear that there was considerable organization behind much of the violence. The following account is based not simply on press reports, but also on interviews with former guerillas who were directly involved in key violent incidents. Although participants perhaps exaggerated the organization and planning of those years, their accounts confirm that the catalyst for resumption of violence was the return of the Libyan-trained fighters. Many of the graduates of Libya had returned to their villages by mid-1989 and set about rebuilding the movement. This renewed activity coincided with the intensifying tension noted by Jones as preceding the major violence.

Some of the graduates of Libya recall their return to Aceh as highly organized. Others say it was ad hoc and they were simply told to go home and "do what we were taught in Libya." In any case, armed with their new skills and prestige, the graduates, once they returned home, began with the quiet work of propaganda. The recollections of Sulaiman Ilham (interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004), a young man from East Aceh, are typical. He recalls that when he returned home from Libya, along with three classmates, in early 1989, he first approached family members and close friends. Slowly, and as more of them arrived, the returnees became more confident. They visited each other in neighboring districts, gathering together acquaintances and making speeches about Aceh Merdeka. They also contacted people who had previously been involved but had become inactive. This activity was possible because Aceh was not closely monitored and they could travel freely. Even when they became bolder and the authorities got wind of their activities, the military at first reacted carefully, not attacking but collecting intelligence to get a sense of their strength.

In their speeches, the returnees conveyed exactly what they had learned in Libya. As one might expect from people taught by Hasan di Tiro, most of them recall that they stressed the need to return to history, that Aceh had been an independent state and should not now bow to other countries. Then they would give examples of how life had deteriorated under "Indonesian-Javanese" rule. Some of them explained that Aceh's current condition contrasted poorly with the conditions of Malaysia, Libya, and other countries they had visited. Sulaiman Ilham recalls that comparing Aceh's poverty to Singapore and Malaysia was especially effective (interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004). All of them emphasized the great future that awaited an independent Aceh, as well as their own confidence as youths that they would be able to win independence. Such lectures usually culminated with oath taking. Young men who had been singled out, or sometimes large groups, would pledge loyalty to the struggle and its leaders, and declare their readiness to sacrifice themselves.

People who were not involved in the movement recall with surprise how open GAM propaganda activity became. Many individuals in areas such as Samalanga and Sawang recounted to me in interviews stories of youths parading past military posts openly carrying weapons, and of GAM operatives recruiting people at public meetings when it was all but certain that intelligence agents were present. Not surprisingly, government officials soon knew that renewed trouble was brewing. In the words of Ibrahim Hasan, the governor at that time, they could smell it, "like the smell of cooking food." He recalls that

former Darul Islam fighters warned the government that a GAM revival was under way, and the first public signs of trouble were when individuals forced children at school to sing the *hikayat prang sabi* rather than the Indonesian national anthem (Ibrahim Hasan, interview with author, Jakarta, April 20, 2004). The military paused before responding with concerted violence to the signs of reviving insurgency. Many Acehnese and other observers concluded that this forbearance meant that the military was manipulating the violence in some way, but an equally plausible explanation is that it was trying to get the measure of the threat.

GAM militants stress the rapid advances they made and the receptiveness of the population, especially after they seized weapons from soldiers. Eventually they became so confident that they operated virtually openly. For instance, Guree Rahman recalls that Aceh Merdeka classified villages as "black" or "white": "In white villages, all the residents would already know us, all of them. You could write the word GAM across your shoulders and nothing would happen." He thinks that in the mid-1980s about one quarter of the villages in Pase were white; when the Libyans returned, the number increased to 75 percent (interview with author, Stockholm, June 12, 2004). Sulaiman Ilham recalls that within a few months of his return from Libya all inhabitants of the sixteen villages in his district knew what he was doing, but no one betrayed him (interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004). These recollections do not fit with the conventional history of GAM as a secretive and weak movement at that time, but they do echo some (but not all) of the interviews I have conducted with village people in these areas. The likelihood is that the situation was very patchy, with GAM operating relatively freely in some areas, but not in most.

Next, GAM fighters stepped up their armed attacks. In the 1970s they had been constrained by their lack of weapons and by Hasan di Tiro's view that they should prioritize propaganda. Now they agreed that they should take the offensive. The GAM fighters were still outnumbered and poorly armed; many of the most audacious early attacks were intended to acquire weapons. Incidents began in mid-1989 in former Aceh Merdeka heartlands such as Tiro in Pidie, and peaked in about April or May 1990 (Asia Watch 1990, 12–24; Jones 1997, 11). They included shootings at police and military posts; arson at some schools, other public installations, and transmigrant villages; and targeted assassinations of police and military personnel, informants, and other individuals. There were also a few attacks, some fatal, on Javanese transmigrants and itinerant traders. An especially important turning point was a raid on a military post in Buloh Blang Ara, in which fighters killed soldiers and seized seventeen M16s and ammunition.

Former combatants often recall with relish their experiences of fighting, but they also say they knew they were starting a long and arduous campaign. An immediate aim was to facilitate propaganda. Combatants claim that their mobility increased once they had obtained weapons and made their first attacks. They would go into villages carrying their arms and no longer feel afraid. If people were gathered, they would simply say, "We are from the Acehnese nation and we wish to talk." If, as one informant explained, people tried to leave they would "half-force" them to stay to listen to their speeches (confidential interview with author, Stockholm, June 2004).

Indonesian press reports in this period were sanitized. Security officials tried to downplay the unrest and initially denied that those involved were from Aceh Merdeka. The press doubted whether the movement still existed.[10] Military officers derided it as a "Gang of Security Disruptors" (Gerombolan Pengacau Keamanan, or GPK) consisting of a handful of criminals, military deserters, and the like who were motivated by the *ganja* trade rather than by politics. They also at first denied that GPK members had been trained in Libya; one army officer said that such claims were merely "their attempt to make themselves appear big" (*Tempo*, June 30, 1990, 25). However, officials also expressed frustration at how difficult it was to uproot the movement. As Major General Pramono, chief of the military command covering Aceh, put it, "in the beginning, when I carried out the operation, in July 1990, it was very difficult to find out who was GPK and who was not. They lived in the villages along with the community, and nobody wanted to report them. It means that the community was influenced" (*Tempo*, November 17, 1990, 34). Other reports hinted at the progress the movement was making. One report in a national news magazine (*Tempo*, August 18, 1990, 26) mentions in passing that more than eight hundred residents of one village in the subdistrict of Baktiya in North Aceh "surrendered" to the local military command because previously the GPK had "forced" them to take an oath.

The Military Response

The military harshly suppressed the new insurgency. For almost a decade, between mid-1990 and 1998, much of rural Aceh, especially the districts of Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh, became like a country under military occupation. As has been noted, these years later became know as the "DOM era." Military commanders later denied that they had used the term *DOM*, but it aptly describes the transformation wrought in Aceh.

The major escalation in counterinsurgency operations occurred in June and July 1990, just after GAM attacks peaked. Later reports suggest that large

numbers of outside troops moved into the province, including a detachment of the notoriously brutal Kopassus (Komando Pasukan Khusus) Special Force Command troops. According to Jones' (1997) account, from this time on there was an expanded military presence, including more convoys, barricaded posts, and nonuniformed men on patrol with guns, as well as reports of arbitrary killings and collective punishment. Dozens of individuals were arrested, tried, and jailed for participation in subversive activities. A much larger number of suspected GAM sympathizers and other civilians were killed. Most subsequent estimates of the death toll from military violence fall between one thousand and three thousand, although many Acehnese say these figures are too low. Overall, the DOM period is remembered as one of infamy. Space does not allow a full discussion of military behavior. Analyses can be found in reports by international human rights agencies (such as Asia Watch 1990, 1991, 1992; and Amnesty International 1993), in later reports by Indonesian investigation teams, and in works by foreign scholars (for example, Robinson 1998).

At least three patterns of military violence stand out. First, the abuses were unrestrained. Suspects were not simply killed; they were disfigured or dismembered first and then their mutilated bodies were left in public places. Rape became common. The military established a network of torture centers. Soldiers and intelligence agents not only killed people in the heat of battle or harmed them in acts of collective punishment immediately after firefights, but they also abducted and murdered many people in the dead of night.

Second, despite the lack of restraint, the violence was not random in its overall intent or effect (although there were many individual arbitrary acts). Instead, it was part of a purposeful counterinsurgency policy. Most of the worst abuses targeted individuals who were believed to possess information about GAM, such as wives or relatives of GAM members. Other actions, such as the deliberate dumping of corpses on roadsides or in town squares, or the parading of the bodies of slain GAM combatants through villages, were part of an attempt to terrorize the population as a whole.

Third, although they were shocking, the gross abuses were arguably less consequential than the daily experience of petty harassment. For most people, the risk of being abducted and killed was relatively low, but being manhandled or forced to pay money at military checkpoints was a regular occurrence. Soldiers forced villagers to participate in militias and compulsory nighttime guard duty, and beat whoever fell asleep. Students risked a beating, or worse, if they forgot to take their identity cards when riding by bus. In personal narratives of why people came to sympathize with the separatist cause, such experiences of arbitrary violence often figure prominently. The consequences of

failing to comply with military orders were severe. For instance, one university student who later joined GAM recalled that in 1994 soldiers at a checkpoint shot dead a friend when he failed to slow down; another time soldiers forced him to eat his own identity papers when he failed to wake up during a bus inspection (interview with author, Stockholm, June 2, 2004). Such stories were common.

Despite the long-term consequences, in the short term the military's approach was brutally effective. Just as after the earlier unrest, most of the important guerilla commanders were hunted down and killed. The commander of the Pase district, Yusuf Ali, was killed in December 1991 (*Kompas*, December 30, 1991); the senior commander in Aceh, seventy-year-old Keuchik Umar, was shot dead in December 1992 (*Angkatan Bersenjata*, December 18, 1992). A few commanders were captured and tried, such as the Libyan-trained bomb maker Ligadinsyah Ibrahim (*Jakarta Post*, May 19, 1992). Many of the other key figures, such as Robert, Arjuna, and Daud Kandang, fled. Unlike many rebel movements in such dire circumstances, however, GAM had a refuge nearby.

Malaysia

After the military crackdown, Malaysia became increasingly important as a new site of Acehnese resistance. It was a convenient sanctuary for fleeing supporters of Aceh Merdeka, but it also became a source of recruits, a site where money and logistics were collected, and a place where nationalist fantasies proliferated.

Malaysia differed from the other sites of Acehnese exile communities that emerged over the following decade. Most such communities consisted of small groups of individuals, most of whom were involved in nationalist politics prior to fleeing Aceh. In Malaysia, by contrast, there was a relatively large and well-established Acehnese population, and it was growing rapidly. Moreover, Malaysia was nearby and accessible: it could be reached by an overnight boat trip.

Aceh had a long history of intimate links with the Malay Peninsula. Prior to the Dutch invasion, Aceh's closest commercial ties were with the Straits Settlements, which were frequently visited by Acehnese traders, nobles, and religious scholars. These ties were disrupted but not broken by Dutch rule. The trade connection with the Peninsula remained strong during the revolution and in the early years of Indonesian independence. The government's attempt to disrupt these ties by abolishing the barter trade was one irritant that contributed to the Darul Islam revolt. During the revolt itself there was a busy commerce across the Strait of Malacca, with boats from rebel areas smuggling

out contraband, such as rubber, and bringing back arms and other supplies. Some Malaya-based Acehnese businessmen in the 1950s supported the movement and acted as conduits between it and the outside world (Sjamsuddin 1985, 210–211).

One family that played an important role from the 1950s on was that of Maimud Haitar, an Acehnese businessman who had moved to Singapore in the 1920s. He had become successful in, among other things, the scrap iron trade and owned a large house. He also, by most accounts, remained loyal to Acehnese traditions, teaching his children Acehnese language and customs and insisting that they marry other Acehnese. During Darul Islam and afterward, Hasan di Tiro often visited the older man and became close to his sons, Malik and Amir Mahmud. He later made them, respectively, representative to the UN and minister of trade in the first Aceh Merdeka cabinet (*Tempo*, November 25, 1978, 8). The family, especially the younger son, Malik, played a crucial role in helping di Tiro and others flee at the end of the 1970s.

The Haitar family was unusual, however. There was only a relatively small group of Acehnese (perhaps one hundred people) in Singapore (Malik Mahmud, interview with author, Stockholm, June 8, 2004). There were much larger communities in Malaysia, especially in Kedah state, in the Yan district, on Langkawi island, and in Penang (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 24, 1991, 20–21). Few of them had much interest in homeland politics, however. Most were from families who had been in Malaya about a hundred years, or at least for several decades. Some were wealthy, and most were thoroughly acculturated. A few were part of Malaysia's governing elite.

By the mid-1980s, however, a new flow of Acehnese to Malaysia was beginning—part of a larger migration of Indonesian labor drawn by Malaysia's economic boom. Malaysia was experiencing a severe labor shortage, especially in low-skill sectors such as plantations, transportation, construction, and domestic service. Indonesia, by contrast, had a large surplus, and in Malaysia workers could earn wages that were several times higher than wages in Indonesia (Hugo 1993, 55). The great majority of Indonesian workers in Malaysia were illegal migrants. Estimates vary, but most suggest that by the early 1990s there were 750,000 to 1,000,000 Indonesian migrants in Malyasia, and most of them were illegal (Hugo 1993, 42; Nayyar 1997).

Because illegal workers were important to Malaysia's economy, government policy toward them fluctuated. Their lives were insecure; arrest and deportation were constant possibilities. The government sometimes launched crackdowns and mass deportations, but at other times it turned a blind eye and even facilitated their integration; in 1989 and 1992, amnesties were an-

nounced and hundreds of thousands of illegal Indonesian workers gained work permits (Hugo 1993, 45). It was possible for the economically successful among the legalized migrants to eventually obtain permanent residency and even citizenship.

Precise figures are not available but a small proportion of Indonesian migrants in Malaysia were from Aceh, with the total number likely in the tens of thousands by the early 1990s. Officially registered overseas workers from Aceh were almost exclusively men (Hugo 1993, 46), and anecdotal evidence suggests that this was mostly the case with illegal migrants. In the 1970s a new migrant community of Acehnese began to form, centered on the Klang Valley urban area around Kuala Lumpur (Wong and Afrisal 2002, 56). Many of the young Acehnese men coming to Malaysia worked in plantations or on building sites, but many also became successful in small trade, often initially by opening small shops that serviced other migrants. In addition to responding to the economic incentive, many of the new migrants also saw their Malaysian sojourn as a rite of passage into adult life, as part of the established practice of *merantau* discussed earlier. Some male migrants would return home to Aceh after several years of working in Malaysia; others, especially the more economically successful, stayed on and married Malaysian women.

Their experiences made many Acehnese in Malaysia receptive to the nationalist message. Many who worked in, or even just visited, Malaysia recall their initial surprise at seeing the more developed infrastructure and relatively comfortable living standards there. The experience of this difference heightened their sense of deprivation and dovetailed with GAM's message about the economic exploitation of Aceh by Indonesia. As one GAM campaigner who had been active among migrants in Malaysia in the 1990s recalled, he and his colleagues often began their pitch by simply asking, "Why are we here? Is our own country so poor?" (Muzzakir Abdul Hamid, interview with author, Stockholm, June 4, 2004).

GAM gathered many of its most famous recruits from among recent migrants. For example, Ishak Daud, who later became a major leader in East Aceh, had moved to Malaysia in the late 1980s and at first peddled cigarettes at workplaces by motorcycle. Eventually he became prosperous; owned a car, a house, and three shops; and was able to donate money to the movement. Muzakkir Manaf, who became the movement's main military commander, was, according to an official, "only the driver of a goods truck" in Malaysia (*Analisa*, December 5, 2003). Darwis Djeunib, who became the GAM military commander in Batee Iliek, was a laborer on construction projects in both Malaysia and Singapore.

When the first group of Libyan trainees returned to Malaysia, about half of them stayed on there, because many of them already had families and businesses. They had the task of explaining GAM's mission to their fellow Acehnese. From this time on, GAM grew rapidly in Malaysia. The same pattern occurred with each successive class of Libyan graduates, with significant numbers—probably several hundred in total—staying in Malaysia rather than going to Aceh to fight. Sometimes they were ordered to stay; for others it was personal choice. Some became quite successful in business, owning two or three shops, and were a source of funds for the movement. These ex-Libyans formed the nucleus of a strong Aceh Merdeka network in Malaysia that from this time forward was to be crucial in sustaining the insurgency across the strait.

A further influx of Acehnese into Malaysia, and increased politicization of those already there, occurred when the military launched its crackdown in Aceh in 1990. There was now an intermittent flow of refugees and fleeing GAM combatants into Malaysia. Most of these people disguised themselves as part of the regular flood of illegal workers crossing into Malaysian territory via Riau; some came clandestinely by boat. Several boatloads came in an organized manner, with passengers carrying banners asking for asylum.

The arrival of GAM supporters, and their political activities in Malaysia, caused tension between the Indonesian and Malaysian governments (*Utusan Malaysia*, April 9, 1991; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 18, 1991). Malaysia effectively provided safe haven for separatists from Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines; some GAM supporters say that some Malaysian officials also sympathized with them, mostly for historical and religious reasons. Some believed that the "police were often more lenient with their irregular status, in unofficial recognition of their plight" (Wong and Afrisal 2002, 56). Opposition groups in Malaysia certainly sympathized openly with the Acehnese. Publications of PAS (Parti Islam SeMalaysia), the Islamist party of Malaysia, included articles on the Aceh conflict that were sympathetic to GAM or written by GAM members (see, for example, *Harakah*, April 5, 1991 and April 12, 1993). Human rights groups and other opposition parties also took up the plight of the refugees and campaigned against their deportation. On the other hand, the Malaysian government wanted to maintain good relations with its large and potentially troublesome neighbor and was generally unsympathetic to illegal arrivals of all kinds.

As with policy on illegal workers in general, Malaysian policy toward the Acehnese fluctuated. There was never a *laissez faire* approach. When GAM members disembarked from boats in Malaysia and asked for protection, some of them were arrested and kept incommunicado in underground cells for many

months, but initially there was no forcible repatriation of people who claimed to be fleeing for political reasons. In practice, a few GAM supporters were forced back to Aceh, often with boatloads of ordinary illegal workers. Some would avoid trouble at their disembarkation point in Indonesia by pretending to be non-Acehnese. After the UNHCR became involved, the government relaxed its policies for a while. Some detainees seeking asylum were released and granted temporary permits. The climate remained tenuous, however, and even those with UNHCR papers could be swept up in raids against illegal workers.

Despite the difficulties, the early 1990s saw a dramatic increase in organizing activity by GAM in Malaysia. A new *Biro Penerangan GAM* (GAM information bureau) was established to coordinate publicity and campaign work. Its members included a few long-term members of the Acehnese diaspora, such as Bakhtiar Abdullah, who had been a coordinator of GAM's training program in Libya, as well as others who had recently arrived from Indonesia, such as Ishak Daud (who was back in Malaysia after leading armed activity in East Aceh for a time) and Yusra Habib Abdul Gani (a former lecturer at the Muhammadiyah University in Jakarta). One of the team's main jobs was propaganda work in the Acehnese community. Its members sought Acehnese workers wherever they could find them, in migrant residential areas, in markets, or on muddy construction sites. A second function was coordinating assistance for people who were detained for immigration violations, helping those who were still free to avoid capture, and lobbying the UNHCR and other bodies for assistance. In the process, they began to develop publicity and media skills. The bureau also began collating reports of human rights abuses in Aceh and distributing them among migrants and to potentially sympathetic international nongovernmental organizations.

Another increasingly important aspect of GAM activity in Malaysia—fundraising for the insurgency and the purchase and smuggling of weapons—was conducted underground. Acquiring enough modern weapons to seriously threaten the Indonesian military had long been a major challenge and source of internal friction. When the first Libyan-trained fighters returned to Aceh in the late 1980s, they were unarmed and acquired their first guns only by raiding military posts or murdering individual soldiers. After the military launched its counterattack, some GAM fighters blamed their inability to resist on their lack of weapons. In 1991, with complaints beginning to surface about the Sweden-based leadership's inability to provide logistical support, a group of fighters who had recently fled Aceh organized the first major meeting of GAM sympathizers in Malaysia. About two hundred people attended and donated money, including some successful businessmen, many of whom provided more than

five hundred ringgit (about US$200) each. A number of GAM operatives used this money to go to Thailand, where after some initial efforts they made contacts in the black market and purchased seventy-eight weapons, mostly M16s and AK-47s. These were shipped directly from Thailand to Aceh, along with about thirty-six GAM fighters to boost the insurgency. Within two years—by 1994—however, about half of these fighters were dead and the insurgency had again ground to a halt.[11]

From the mid-1990s onward, however, the GAM network became increasingly organized and effective in Malaysia. Malik Mahmud was starting to dominate organizational matters, including fundraising and arms purchases. One of the founding members and the defense minister of the movement, Zakaria Saman, alias Karim Bangkok, moved to Thailand. It is reputed that over the following decade or so he became fluent in Thai and developed excellent contacts in the clandestine arms trade. A second major shipment of arms, consisting of about three hundred weapons, was sent in 1997—and caused a media sensation and alarm among security officials when sixty-three of them were captured by the military in February of that year.

Throughout the 1990s, as GAM entrenched its network in Malaysia, the Indonesian government became concerned. A confidential report produced by the defense attaché of the Indonesian embassy in Kuala Lumpur in 1997 estimated that about two thousand individuals in Malaysia had Aceh Merdeka membership cards. Supporters of the movement, the report continued, were collecting money to buy arms, recruiting among immigrants in detention centers, and taking other action to damage Indonesian interests. The report complained, however, that there was "reluctance on the part of the government of Malaysia to go all out helping Indonesia," and that "under the surface the migrants from Aceh are given special treatment." The report blamed the influence of Malaysian businesspeople and officials of Acehnese descent, and concluded that the best option was forced repatriation, despite the risks of international criticism.[12]

Beginning in early 1997 and under increasing Indonesian pressure, the Malaysian authorities began to harden their approach. They first decided against renewing the agreement with the UNHCR under which asylum seekers had been allowed to stay temporarily. Police raided GAM's information office. There are stories of Special Branch officers seizing some activists off the street and handing them over to Indonesian authorities in international waters. A few activists managed to take up UNHCR's offer to find third countries and joined the swelling ranks of Acehnese refugees in Europe, Australia, and North America. Still others decided to risk returning to Aceh illegally. GAM activists, eventually about four hundred in total, were captured and sent to large mi-

grant detention centers. Some of these centers, however, became new recruiting grounds for GAM.[13] The Indonesian government sent *ulama* and other prominent Acehnese to persuade detainees to return to Aceh voluntarily, but few did so. Eventually, following ministerial-level negotiations, the Malaysians agreed to forced repatriation. Apparently fearing violence, and to make deportation easier, authorities at several detention camps drugged detainees' food, triggering a riot in the Semenyih camp in which at least eight detainees and one policeman were killed, and a mass breakout from another camp. A few dozen escapees and others later broke into the U.S. embassy and the UNHCR office in Kuala Lumpur, where they stayed for several months before being granted asylum elsewhere. More were arrested as they tried to break into other embassies. Eventually several hundred were forcibly repatriated to Aceh. According to GAM sources, some were tortured and disappeared.[14]

At this point, in the face of what Malik Mahmud later described as a "pincer movement," involving military operations in Aceh combined with police action and deportations in Malaysia, GAM's prospects looked bleak. In fact, the movement was on the verge of rapid growth. Tightening conditions in Malaysia coincided with the start of a greater drama in Indonesia. A wave of anti-Soeharto demonstrations was beginning to gather unstoppable momentum. GAM supporters were being forced back to Indonesia just as the Soeharto regime was collapsing.

The importance of Malaysia to Aceh's insurgency can hardly be overemphasized. Comparative studies of civil wars since the 1980s suggest that a frequent source of rebel success is a large diaspora willing to support a homeland rebel movement financially and politically. Aceh's diaspora was not widely dispersed or wealthy, but the presence of a concentrated Acehnese community in Malaysia was crucial to GAM's resurrection and survival. Malaysia provided a place of refuge; a source of finances, weapons, and recruits; and a window onto the wider world.

Conclusion: Between Local and Global

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Acehnese separatism began to take on the appearance of a full-fledged insurgency. A decade earlier, military authorities had been confident that they had destroyed the rebellion. In fact, even when Aceh had seemed quiescent during the 1980s, the skeleton of Aceh Merdeka had survived and its ideas had still attracted support. The movement was again suppressed in the early 1990s, but thereafter the authorities were never confident that they had destroyed it entirely. There was a heavy troop presence in Aceh until the Soeharto regime collapsed in 1998.

In exploring how and why the movement survived despite the considerable force arrayed against it, this chapter has pointed toward two factors that at first sight appear very different. The first factor was that the movement derived sustenance from, and even fused with, patterns of social organization and belief systems that permeated Aceh's rural society. It rode on kinship and other preexisting networks. It gained authority because its ideas resonated with villagers' own views about proper social order and behavior. The second factor was the global dimensions of the movement and the ways in which it transformed and sustained itself through exile. Not only did GAM leaders formulate and disseminate the Acehnese nationalist vision from exile, but overseas sites, especially Malaysia and Libya, supplied recruits, training, and logistics, enabling resumption of hostilities in the late 1980s.

These two factors interacted. Without international links, GAM's rebellion may have sunk into the parochialism of the rural world in which it was rooted. Sporadic outbursts of unrest against authority had occurred in rural Aceh since the 1930s without threatening the state. Teungku Bantaqiah's "white robe" movement was just the latest of these. In contrast, experiences in Malaysia and Libya gave the young men who became GAM leaders a worldliness and sophistication that added breadth to their vision and gave them credibility back home. When GAM fighters came back from overseas, not only did they bring guns, but they also came with new confidence and dynamism. Local youths looked on them with awe, wild rumors spread about the foreign military assistance they would bring, and (at least in the recollection of some of the fighters) parents rushed to marry their daughters to them. By the same token, exile did not undermine but rather heightened the movement's localism. Whether laboring on the underbelly of the Malaysian economic miracle or escaping warfare in lonely European refuge, many Acehnese looked back to their homeland with intensified grievance, longing, and romanticism.

Fusion of the local and global is a feature of many political movements in the age of globalization. It has also been visible in the genesis of nationalist movements since the colonial period. It is a central contention of this book that nationalism is fundamentally Janus-faced with respect to domestic and international contexts. Nationalism, as a movement that aspires to join the international nation-state system, is outward looking. As a movement that seeks to justify independence by asserting the uniqueness and authenticity of the national community, it is drawn magnetically toward the local.

5

The Nationalist Moment

Activists and Politicians from Referendum to Autonomy, 1998–2001

> Do you all know why the Acehnese people are now asking for independence . . . ? Alright, now I will tell you all that the Acehnese people have suffered deeply from the misdeeds of the Indonesian security forces. . . . So now it is time for us to ask for a peaceful divorce. Let us separate calmly, without more bloodshed in the land of Aceh. Our union for these 55 years has been long enough so let us, the Acehnese nation take care of our own affairs. . . .
>
> *Woman activist Nurmasyitah addressing hundreds of thousands of people at a proreferendum rally (*Serambi Indonesia*, November 12, 2000)*

For its first two decades, Acehnese nationalism was furtive and clandestine, confined to rural areas and overseas. This situation changed dramatically in mid-1998, when antigovernment mobilization exploded in Aceh. Ideas that had been discussed only in hushed whispers suddenly flooded the public domain. Huge demonstrations demanded a referendum on independence. Government leaders in Jakarta rushed to placate Acehnese demands.

The trigger for this change was the collapse of the Soeharto regime. This was not an event of Acehnese making. Instead, Soeharto's resignation on May 21, 1998, resulted from a catastrophic economic collapse, protests in Indonesia's urban centers, and the splintering of its ruling elite. These events transformed the Indonesian context in which Acehnese nationalism operated. Previously taboo issues were now on the public agenda. As Jacques Bertrand (2004) has put it, Soeharto's fall was a "critical juncture" in which the rules governing both regime and state were suddenly open for renegotiation. Some groups mobilized violently to secure greater resources, leading to ethnic

and religious conflicts in Kalimantan, Maluku, and elsewhere (Bertrand 2004, Klinken 2007). Secessionist sentiment exploded in the three "separatist provinces" of East Timor, Papua, and Aceh; new, weaker pro-independence movements emerged elsewhere, such as in Riau and Bali. In East Timor, President B. J. Habibie allowed a UN-supervised referendum that was won convincingly by pro-independence forces in August 1999. Some people believed that Indonesia was on the verge of disintegrating.

Indonesia's experience resembled that of some other multiethnic states during the "third wave" of democratization in which authoritarian collapse triggered ethnic mobilization. In Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, ethnic protests and civil war led to state breakup. In these cases, some observers saw ethnic and nationalist mobilization as representing the "revenge of the past" (Suny 1993), with the end of authoritarian controls allowing long-repressed identities to surface. Likewise, in Indonesia some observers argued that post-Soeharto violence reflected deep-seated, primordial, and even ancient enmities. This view was mostly discredited among scholars (Mote and Rutherford 2001, although see Wee 2002) but was popular among journalists and commentators, who sometimes used the metaphor of the "seething cauldron" to describe Indonesia. Some analysts suggested that conflicts were occurring because (as one anonymous Western diplomat explained) during the Soeharto years Indonesia was "an artificial country held together by artificial means" (Gaouette 1999). Soeharto's exit had taken the lid off the cauldron.

Others have looked differently at the connection between authoritarian breakdown and ethnic mobilization, stressing the contingency and plasticity of national identity. Writing in the context of postcommunist Europe, Brubaker (1998, 280) argues that a "nation" should not be conceived as a "real entity" awaiting mobilization. In his view, "'Groupness' and 'boundedness' must be taken as a *variable*, as *emergent properties* of particular structural or conjunctural settings: they cannot properly be taken as given or axiomatic" (Brubaker 1998, 298, emphasis in original). Likewise, Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly (2001, 253) write of a rapid "identity shift" in the Soviet breakup, "with longtime beneficiaries of Communist control backing off from identification with the Party and its legacy in favor of a series of improvised alternatives among which ethnic labels (including Russian) assumed ever-increasing scope." Writing on Indonesia, Benedict Anderson (1999, 6) has argued that national sentiment appears "when, in a certain physical territory, the inhabitants begin to feel that they share a common destiny, a common future. . . . Typically, it arises quickly and suddenly in the space of one generation, a clear sign of its novelty."

Aceh after 1998 is of interest in the light of such observations. In Aceh one can witness a new nationalist sensibility—complete with historical myths, subculture, organized movement, and political program—emerging not merely in the space of a generation but in a few months. A little more than half a year after Soeharto fell, a group of activists who had not before seen their Indonesian and Acehnese identities as being in conflict were describing themselves as a new vanguard of Acehnese nationalism. Six months later Aceh seemed on the verge of independence.

This chapter analyzes the explosion of urban and peaceful nationalist mobilization in Aceh after 1998. It analyzes the groups that pioneered the referendum campaign of 1999–2000; their social background, views, and strategy; and how this nationalist moment ended. The focus is on groups other than GAM, which, at least at first, was not crucial to the new mobilizations. The new leaders were more urban and middle class than GAM fighters, with university students especially prominent. Many of them were connected to Indonesia-wide activist networks.

The chapter makes two basic arguments. The first argument regards the *process* by which the new nationalism came into being. The essence was a cycle of mobilization involving bargaining between Acehnese protestors and a greatly weakened, but in one respect intransigent, state. The students and others who led the 1999–2000 protests were not initially interested in independence. At first their concerns resembled those of other activists throughout Indonesia: removal of Soeharto, political reform, and especially punishment of human rights abusers. Although the new democratic regime was able to concede on many issues (thus encouraging protestors' ambitions), it was unable and unwilling to control the military or punish its leaders. Amid stirrings of renewed insurgency, soldiers began to commit new atrocities. This combination produced radicalization. The students did not initially think of independence as a sacred trust inherited from earlier generations (as did GAM) but instead saw it as a way to pressure the government to make concessions. Nevertheless, the consequent identity shift they experienced was real, and many became committed nationalists.

The second argument regards the *novelty* of this movement and the nationalist vision it expressed. Most of the key actors had had little contact with GAM, and their outlook differed from that of members of the older movement. The new activists radically reframed the struggle for national independence. They emphasized human rights, an inclusionary national identity, and relations with Indonesia that were at least theoretically negotiable. They argued that independence should be achieved by democratic methods instead

of by armed struggle. In condemning the government, their starting point was the discourse about Aceh's specialness into which they had previously been socialized and which they now turned on its head to stress Aceh's betrayal by Jakarta. Although grievances were again important, even more so was the ideological context in which the new nationalism arose, and the ideological filters through which the new generation viewed Aceh and its problems. Reflecting that their movement had arisen out of a movement for democratic reform, the new activists saw national belonging in contractual terms and argued that the Indonesian state had violated its trust with Aceh.

The chapter does not confine itself to the activists who demanded independence. The post-Soeharto political opening also temporarily transformed Aceh's political elite, the heirs of the Soeharto-era technocrats. Sharing part of the vision of the referendum protestors but also trying to ride the wave of popular disillusionment, Acehnese intellectuals and politicians also reinvented themselves. They tried to renew the contract between Aceh and Jakarta by institutionalizing long-standing promises of special treatment in a special autonomy law.

The nationalist moment was brief. By late 2000 the mood in Jakarta was hardening against separatism, and the initiative in Aceh was passing back to GAM guerillas in the countryside. The political space began to close once more. Even so, as we shall see in later chapters, this period left important legacies.

Democratization and the Military Legacy

The catalyst for the student protests that swept Indonesia between March and May 1998 was the collapse of the economy in late 1997. The deeper roots were found in the regime ossification and mounting political opposition of the preceding decade. At the end of the 1980s, Soeharto had experimented with political "openness." Briefly, the press became more free and there was greater toleration of dissent. This tentative liberalization triggered mobilization by previously suppressed groups. Soeharto reconsolidated his hold on power and returned to repression, undermining his legitimacy and setting the scene for the convulsion of 1998.

Aceh was isolated from this *fin-du-regime* dynamic. In Aceh the "openness" period coincided with the brutal military control of the Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM) years. Some of the boldest Jakarta media hinted at military human rights abuses in Aceh; none of the local press dared to do so. A blanket of fear smothered most political and civil society activity. The nongovernmental organization (NGO) movement, which from the late 1980s was helping to

undermine the legitimacy of authoritarian rule elsewhere, was putting down only feeble roots in Aceh. There was some documentation of human rights abuses and assistance for victims, but most NGO workers avoided sensitive issues. There were only faint glimmers of student activism. By 1997 the rector of Syiah Kuala University and some other intellectuals had worked up the courage to propose the revocation of Aceh's status as a *daerah rawan* (disturbed area) but had gotten nowhere. As Soeharto's regime waned, the military's architecture of control remained firm in Aceh.

It was in this context that the first renewed stirrings of political unrest occurred in Aceh. The first student protest of the new mobilization there was on March 18, 1998, about three weeks into the wave of campus unrest then sweeping the country. Held on the campus of Syiah Kuala University, it was organized by Student Solidarity for the People (Solidaritas Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat), a small group linked to left-wing activists in other provinces. The protestors' demands were cautious compared to the increasingly radical anti-Soeharto protests elsewhere. They condemned the government for the economic crisis, listened to poems by Indonesia's famous protest poet W. S. Rendra, and sang Indonesian nationalist songs (*Serambi Indonesia*, March 19, 1998). Over the next two months, Acehnese students gradually adopted the bolder anti-Soeharto and anti-regime tone of radicals elsewhere. They also began to raise local issues, including calling for an end to military extortion on the main roads (*Waspada*, May 8, 1998). The largest demonstration so far in Aceh's modern history occurred on May 20, 1998, when, as part of Indonesia-wide protests, Acehnese university students gathered in the tens of thousands and called for Soeharto's removal from power, the cancellation of five restrictive political laws, and democratic elections (*Serambi Indonesia*, May 21, 1998). Their demands marked them as part of the protests enveloping all of Indonesia, and as Acehnese activists operating in an Indonesian framework.

This orientation was not surprising. As James Siegel (2000, 356) observed, "Acehnese university students, in their tastes, their manner of expression, their very status as 'students' (*mahasiswa*), are nearly indistinguishable from Indonesian students outside the province." Acehnese tertiary students (about seventy thousand in 1998–1999) had been beneficiaries of the economic modernization and urbanization of the Soeharto years. They were participants in Indonesia's cosmopolitan urban culture; by 1995 the urban share of Aceh's population had grown, according to census data, to 20.5 percent of the total. Students often spoke Indonesian among themselves on campus and in their lodging houses. (In this respect too they were like many of their urban compatriots; 1990 census figures showed that in Banda Aceh 41.9 percent of the

population spoke Indonesian at home, compared to only 12.7 percent for Aceh as a whole.) Students were also avid consumers of the popular culture emanating from Jakarta. Moreover, as urbanites, most of them had been isolated from Acehnese nationalism and past conflict, both of which had been predominantly rural. One observer of the security disturbances of 1990 explained that "traveling from Pidie up into the Banda Aceh District was almost like going into another country, of leaving a zone of occupation and entering a region that was undergoing significant economic development" (Jones 1997, 33–34). Among the student protestors of 1998–1999, a few had relatives who had been involved in GAM; more were only vaguely aware of the movement and of the methods that had been used to suppress it.

After President Soeharto resigned on May 21, 1998—the day after the large protest just described above—the political context changed dramatically throughout Indonesia. There was a sudden democratic upsurge. Many new social and political organizations were formed. In Jakarta and other big towns, the student movement and its allies pressured Soeharto's successor, B. J. Habibie, who struggled to retain power by enacting a string of democratic reforms. In the regions, the focus was often local: communities protested about local grievances and local politicians called for greater autonomy.

In Aceh there was a flowering of civil society and a rapid switch from national to local concerns. Within six months Banda Aceh was transformed from a political backwater into a center of frenetic activism. Workshops, seminars, demonstrations, and hunger strikes became the daily fare. The local media was transformed; there was a new, feisty investigative tabloid, *Kontras*, and local radio news stations appeared. Before long, even the major daily, *Serambi Indonesia*, was printing condemnations of the military and statements by GAM leaders. Student groups were the most confrontational, but scarcely less visible were a range of NGOs that campaigned on everything from human rights abuses to corruption in local government and the rights of women. According to one count, there were more than two hundred NGOs in the territory by mid-2000, with many of the newer ones having a human rights focus (Yunis 2000, 10). The growth of the NGO sector was also facilitated by a burst of foreign donor support for Indonesian civil society in the post-Soeharto years, with particular interest in supporting groups that might help reduce conflict in areas such as Aceh. As one Acehnese NGO leader recalled, "You didn't have to be clever to get money back then; no matter what proposal you sent to the funders, so long as you met their requirements, you'd get it" (Risman A. Rachman, interview with the author, Jakarta, April 1, 2004). In addition, academics and artists, as well as Islamic leaders, became outspoken critics of the government.

A gamut of issues surfaced during the first six months of this Acehnese political awakening. Old discontent about the exploitation of Aceh's natural resources was prominent. Some protestors also took up Islamic themes. Initially, many also wanted expanded autonomy for the province. The defining issue, the one that drove the mobilization spiral, was human rights abuses. Within a week of Soeharto's resignation, Acehnese NGOs flew several "DOM widows" to Jakarta to speak about their experiences. Rural people who had previously lived under intense military scrutiny now spoke publicly. One man from East Aceh told a Java-based newspaper, "Whenever a soldier would pass, the people were too scared to look at him. Because they could at any time be arrested and sadistically slaughtered. Shot, beaten and thrown down a ravine" (*Suara Merdeka*, August 26, 1998). The media, both nationally and in Aceh, took with relish to reporting harrowing stories of Acehnese victims. Women who had been raped seldom spoke publicly, but their experiences were also publicized.

Before long, fact-finding missions were established by the provincial and national legislatures, as well as by the National Human Rights Commission and local NGOs. They unearthed mass graves, uncovered other evidence of abuses, and released estimates of the number of victims. Journalists and activists named the units and, in some cases, the officers responsible for acts of violence, and identified torture centers and execution sites. The bones of the victims were displayed for public view. In short, there was a great volume of detailed and vivid evidence of military abuses. For urban Acehnese who had been isolated from the worst depredations of DOM, this exposure was moving and it demanded a drastic response.

Students were at the cutting edge of the response. In November 1998 a crowd of thousands of students occupied the Banda Aceh station of the state's Radio Republik Indonesia and forced it to broadcast their demands, which still included national ones, such as elimination of the military's dual function. The main themes, however, were local, with the student speaker "laying out the sins of the security forces, for which there is no sign yet of punishment" (*Serambi Indonesia*, November 20, 1998). They lowered the Indonesian flag outside the governor's residence to half mast. By the end of 1998, students were raising the demand for an independence referendum. A little later they were no longer flying Indonesian flags at half mast but pulling them down altogether (*Waspada*, March 13, 1999).

Both the local political elite and the national government scrambled to keep pace. Provincial politicians became increasingly forceful about Jakarta's mistreatment of Aceh. In late 1998, Syamsuddin Mahmud, the last of Aceh's technocratic governors, proposed that Aceh should receive 60 to 80 percent of

royalties from its natural resource industries (*Waspada*, September 13, 1998). By early 1999 he was calling for Indonesia to become a federation (AFP, February 5, 1999). The newly formed or reinvigorated political parties went further. Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) leaders tried to reclaim their mantle as defenders of Islam and called for introduction of *shari'a* for Muslims in the province. They also proposed federalism and eventually endorsed "the efforts and initiative of the students to invite all parties to greet a referendum as the one and only respected path to bring about a New Aceh blessed by God and beloved by us all" (*Pokok-pokok Pikiran* 1999). Another important party was Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN, the National Mandate Party, which was formed by members of the modernist Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, and benefited in Aceh from the reputation of its national leader, Amien Rais, who was courting regional support by canvassing a federal system. Its Acehnese leaders also proposed federalism, and some endorsed a referendum.

President Habibie and his government struggled to respond. In August 1998, the head of the armed forces, General Wiranto, traveled to Aceh, apologized for past abuses, and announced the withdrawal of several thousand troops, effectively ending DOM. This visit began a regular pattern over succeeding months and years of political leaders visiting Aceh, tearfully stressing the service Aceh had given the republic during the independence struggle, and promising to heal the "wounds" left by DOM. In March 1999, for example, President Habibie apologized to a large crowd in Banda Aceh and promised to rehabilitate and assist victims of the military and speed economic development. When asked about an independence referendum, he was evasive, saying that he had no personal authority to decide on such a matter (*Republika*, March 27, 1999; March 30, 1999). By mid-1999, as the referendum campaign gathered steam, the government in Jakarta began to draft special autonomy legislation (see later discussion) and officials declared they would do almost anything to prevent secession. As Habibie's minister of internal affairs, Syarwan Hamid, put it, "The only thing we cannot accept is GAM. That's all. We can accept almost 100 percent of everything else" (*Republika*, August 27, 1999). Habibie's successor, Abdurrahman Wahid, went even further. He initiated negotiations with GAM and, at the start of his presidency in October 1999, offered even to hold an independence referendum (although he quickly backed down).

The vacillation by the central government and its obvious susceptibility to pressure generated a belief among the Acehnese that almost anything was possible, which accelerated escalation. Making matters worse, the government was not able to placate protesters' demands where it really mattered: redress for

human rights abuses. The military was under intense pressure in this period. Its commanders in Aceh complained that their hands were now tied in dealing with unrest, and they promised to avoid future "excesses." However, the military also remained an important political player nationally. Former generals held key cabinet posts (Syarwan Hamid, for example, had been a commander in Aceh during DOM and was himself a likely target of human right trials). Moreover, the government depended on the army to handle antigovernment protests in Jakarta and rising regional unrest elsewhere. Government leaders also feared the army's potential to undermine or make trouble for them.

As a result, the central government never mustered enough authority to try the military officers responsible for past abuses. Not only that, but from 1998 on, as GAM's insurgency began to revive, troops committed more atrocities. At a massacre at Simpang KKA (a crossroads near the Kertas Kraft Aceh pulp and paper mill) in North Aceh in May 1999, according to an official investigation, they shot forty-six people dead. Video footage of troops firing on the unarmed protestors circulated widely in Aceh. In the village of Beutong Ateuh in West Aceh in July 1999, soldiers killed *ulama* Teungku Bantaqiah and fifty-six of his followers. These well-publicized mass killings were accompanied by the murder of many individuals and other abuses.

The Referendum and the Dynamic of Escalation

Pro-referendum student activists I interviewed in mid-1999 suggested that earlier in the year they had viewed the referendum demand as a bargaining chip to pressure the government to act against human rights violators. Within a few months, after incidents like the Simpang KKA massacre, they said that the referendum proposal was no longer a tactical ploy but a "genuine demand" (various interviews with the author, Banda Aceh, July 1999 and August 2000).

Over the following years I often met the same and similar activists, at first in Aceh itself but later in exile in Jakarta, Malaysia, and elsewhere. In their personal stories about their passage toward Acehnese nationalism, most of these young activists pointed to the abuses committed by the military in early 1999 and subsequent years. As one of them put it to me, nationalism gained support from younger people not because of "old memories but because of Aceh's journey within the Indonesian state." The "entry point" for nationalism was the repression of those years (interview with author, Jakarta, April 7, 2004). Once their curiosity about Acehnese nationalism was kindled, they began to learn about Acehnese history and traditions; but most of them agreed that, as another activist explained, they initially viewed nationalism as a "way out" of state repression (interview with author, Jakarta, April 9, 2004).

Much literature on nationalism sees national identities in instrumentalist terms, as "resources employed by groups of individuals for the pursuit of their common interests" (Brown 2000, 13). According to this perspective, ethnic and national identities are "convenient tools . . . for mobilising mass support in the universal struggle for wealth, power, and privilege" (Smith 1986, 9). Such an emphasis on conscious agency can be useful because it draws our attention to the political nature of nationalist movements and the calculations of opportunity, strategy, and tactics that they make.

In contrast to many rural GAM sympathizers, who often described their affiliation to Acehnese nationalism as deeply held and even inherited, former student activists often had precise recollections of how and when they had committed to the independence cause. Theirs was an explicitly instrumentalist account in that they saw the independence demand as a means to achieve other goals, at least initially. As one of them explained, "At first the referendum demand was only bargaining so that the other demands would be met" (Tami, interview with author, Jakarta, April 3, 2004). There was even an instrumentalist logic in the way that the first protestors presented the referendum demand: they did so as a threat, saying that they would call for a referendum *if* other demands were not met (*Gatra*, December 26, 1998).

The key escalation occurred in early February 1999, a few days after President Habibie made public his offer to East Timor of an independence referendum. Three hundred and eight individuals attended a congress of Acehnese students and youth in Banda Aceh. They represented more than one hundred institutions from the province and beyond. The congress recommended a referendum organized by the United Nations or another international body as an exercise of peaceful self-determination. The congress statement spoke of Indonesian "neocolonialism" and stated that the idea of a federal state "might just be a new strategy from the Republic of Indonesia to ensnare the people of Aceh in uncertainty." Participants insisted that a referendum should include three options: broad autonomy (the formulation favored by the national government), statehood as part of a federal system (already proposed by the governor), and independence. They formed an umbrella organization called Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh (SIRA, the Aceh Referendum Information Center) to promote their campaign, basing it on existing activist networks.

The campaign escalated. When President Habibie spoke in Banda Aceh, some students on the streets outside clashed with security forces, resulting in the hospitalization of 117 of them (*Waspada*, March 27, 1999). By this time students had begun to mobilize village people. At first they returned to their home villages or districts and popularized their campaign to people they

knew. Next they visited high schools, where most principals encouraged them to address classes, and other villages, where all they needed to do was announce a meeting in the prayer hall. By mid-April, banners and graffiti promoting a referendum were visible throughout the province, especially painted on roads. Pro-referendum slogans were often combined with Free Aceh flags and slogans. As one SIRA leader later put it, "It was as if the roads of Aceh became the longest batik in the world. From Banda Aceh to Medan the painting was uninterrupted" (Tami, interview with author, Jakarta, April 3, 2004).

These few months saw a dizzying escalation of mobilization. In June 1999, students and others campaigned for a boycott of the election. In early August, twenty-eight human rights NGOs and the main association of truck and bus owners called a general strike to protest deployment of police paramilitaries, resulting in what one newspaper called the largest mass strike in Indonesia since 1967 (*Kompas*, August 5, 1999). This was the first of many strikes over coming years. The pro-referendum mood spread beyond university students. In early April, a province-wide meeting of *santri*, students from traditional religious boarding schools, endorsed the call for a referendum and renamed their organization using the Arabic phrase *Thaliban*. In September, a congress of five hundred traditionalist *ulama* from rural *dayah*, a group that is normally very risk averse, formed a new organization called Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh (HUDA, or the Aceh Association of Dayah Ulama). The group called on "the central government to immediately conduct a Referendum / Opinion Poll under the supervision of the international community" (*Serambi Indonesia*, September 16, 1999). Even motorcycle rickshaw (*beca'*) drivers held a conference where they called for human rights prosecutions and a referendum (*Waspada*, October 8, 1999), as did previously pro-government organizations such as the Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia (KNPI, or National Committee of Indonesian Youth) (*Waspada*, October 27, 1999). Virtually every sector of Acehnese society was in motion.

Finally, immediately after the independence vote in East Timor, the SIRA activists sought a way to make the referendum campaign "blow up internationally." They settled on a plan of rolling demonstrations in each district capital, coinciding with a large show of force in Banda Aceh. This wave of mobilizations began on October 14, 1999, with a parade of 370 vehicles and fifteen thousand people through the streets of Tapaktuan in South Aceh. Similar protests in other district capitals followed, the largest involving 40,000 to 100,000 people in East Aceh (*Waspada* and *Serambi Indonesia*, October 24, 1999), "tens of thousands" in North Aceh (*Serambi Indonesia*, October 29, 1999), and 250,000 in Pidie (*Kompas*, November 5, 1999). In Meulaboh, a mob burned down the

Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD, Regional People's Representative Council) building, but most of the protests were peaceful, with organizers stressing their efforts to avoid "anarchy." Speakers at the rallies usually presented a referendum as a "middle way" to "resolve" the "conflict," but many participants also waved GAM flags and shouted Aceh Merdeka slogans.

SIRA activists I have interviewed insist that the mobilizations were easily organized. They set up "secretariats" in each region to "socialize" their goals and register participants. The rest occurred by spontaneous participation: donations flowed freely, village communities organized themselves to attend, and truck owners lent their vehicles. In areas where GAM was strong the student activists acknowledge that local commanders gave their approval, thus encouraging participation.

Organizers had a sense of unstoppable momentum, with their protests coming soon after the independence poll in East Timor and amid signs of equivocation in Jakarta. As the protests were peaking, Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of the traditionalist Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama who had several times endorsed the Acehnese right to self-determination, was elected president, prompting one protest organizer in Pidie to explain that "our moment now is exactly right, because K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid, who had helped to unveil the referendum banner [referring to an event in Banda Aceh when students had all but forced Wahid to launch their campaign] has now become the President of the Republic. Now we demand fulfillment of his promise of a referendum to resolve the Aceh problem" (*Waspada*, November 5, 1999).

One tactic was to force public officials and institutions to declare support for a referendum. The pattern was set early, in Tapaktuan. In front of two thousand people squeezed into the Istiqamah Mosque, organizers asked local officials, including the *bupati*, DPRD speaker, and police chief, to convey their demand for a referendum to the government in Jakarta. The *bupati*, T. Machsalmina Ali, reminded them to "channel" their demands through the appropriate institutions, but he also acceded to the request, shouting out "Referendum!" three times to the crowd (*Serambi Indonesia* and *Waspada*, October 15, 1999). Similar scenes followed in other districts, with *bupati*, mayors, and assembly leaders having little choice but to endorse a referendum, with varying enthusiasm, to the crowds.

The protests peaked on November 8, 1999, when organizers claimed that one to two million people participated in a rally in Banda Aceh. The figure seems impossible to credit given that the population of Aceh was around four million, but it clearly was a very large crowd. Convoys of trucks from small towns and villages clogged the streets into the city; hundreds of fishing boats

bedecked with referendum banners sailed up the river that flowed through the city's center. Other towns along the east coast were reportedly deserted. Despite the huge crowd, there was no violence to speak of; soldiers had vacated the streets and released a statement noting that they "understood the inner mood which has taken over the masses and would thus attempt to avoid giving rise to physical violence" (*Kompas*, November 9, 1999).

The people rallying gathered around Banda Aceh's central square in front of the Baiturrahman Mosque. Speakers regaled the crowd about Indonesia's mistreatment of Aceh and the need for a referendum. The head of HUDA, Tengku Nuruzzahri, told them that a referendum was a way for Aceh to "free itself from the spiritual and physical suffering" of the last decades. A well-known female orator who was prominent in pro-independence campaigning in 1999–2003, Cut Nur Asyikin, complained that the Acehnese had suffered greatly: "Are we wrong," she asked, "to demand our dignity and self-respect, after 54 years of being trampled on?" The head of the new *Thaliban* organization, Bulqaini, said that leaders in Jakarta should not be "blind"; the size of the rally showed that "this is not the desire of only a tiny layer of the Acehnese. It is the demand of the entire people. . . . They have left their work to come here with one goal: toward a Free Aceh" (*Kompas* and *Media Indonesia*, November 9, 1999).

Among those addressing the crowd were the acting speaker of the provincial legislature, M. Nasir Djamil; the speaker-elect, Muhammad Yus (also head of the PPP in Aceh); and the vice-governor, Bustari Mansyur (the governor was, perhaps wisely, out of town for the day). They signed a statement that declared that "a peaceful and democratic referendum was a demand and struggle of the entire Acehnese people, that should be responded to positively by all parties at the national and international level." It also committed them to reject militarism and stated that they would deserve "social punishment" (*hukuman sosial*) by the people if they broke their promise to fight for a referendum (*Kompas* and *Serambi Indonesia*, November 9, 1999). According to one newspaper, as they signed the statement the crowd was overtaken by a "sacred atmosphere . . . all at once crying out *Allah Akbar* and their blessings to the Prophet Muhammad" (*Media Indonesia*, November 9, 1999). Another newspaper reported that the crowd was angry when Nasir Djamil explained that they would convey the referendum demand to the Indonesian president and parliament, but they cheered when he said it would also be sent to the UN's secretary-general (*Waspada*, November 9, 1999).

This was a moment of nationalist euphoria. Many of those present believed that Aceh would soon be independent. Rumors spread through the crowd, such as one that Hasan di Tiro was planning a triumphal return on

the forthcoming anniversary of GAM's foundation on December 4 (*Waspada*, November 10, 1999). Political elites in Jakarta were visibly panicked. The day after the rally, President Wahid was reported as saying from Cambodia that he was "pro-referendum" (*Media Indonesia*, November 9, 1999). A few days later, Amien Rais, the newly elected speaker of Indonesia's supreme law-making body, the People's Consultative Assembly, visited Aceh; although he said that a referendum would be a "calamity," he also said that one should be held after 2000 (*Media Indonesia*, November 13, 1999). Muhammad Nazar, head of SIRA, told an audience in Jakarta that there was a 90 to 95 percent chance that Aceh would be independent: "All components of Acehnese society are unanimous. The only impediment left is the Tentara Nasional Indonesia" (TNI, Indonesian National Military) (*Media Indonesia*, November 29, 1999). Later the organizers sometimes looked back ruefully at this moment, regretting that they had not tried to mobilize the assembled masses to take over public buildings and declare Aceh independent there and then.

A New Nationalist Vision

The new urban movement espoused a vision that differed from that of GAM. As we have seen, GAM leaders emphasized the history of precolonial Aceh and expended much effort differentiating the Acehnese from other groups, especially the Javanese. Using a "rectificatory justice" argument, they said that independence was a way to restore the sovereignty of Aceh, which had been stolen by the Dutch and then handed to Indonesia. Most of the new urban activists repudiated this outlook, at least implicitly. They justified secession not as a means to revert to a precolonial state but as a response to Indonesian mistreatment. Their starting point was Aceh's experience within, rather than before, Indonesia, and they framed their goals in democratic terms. A referendum would enable the Acehnese to reevaluate their "social contract" with Jakarta. Their vision of identity was also more civic and inclusionary than the ethnonationalism of GAM.

A striking feature of the new urban mobilization, especially during the first year or so, was its narrowly political rather than cultural or ethnic character. Anthony Smith (2001, 7) argues that "typically a nationalist movement will commence not with a protest rally, declaration or armed resistance, but with the appearance of literary societies, historical research, music festivals and cultural journals." This was not the case with the post-1998 activists, who plunged immediately into politics. These new activists had a lot to say about human rights, democracy, and the like; but at least initially they were unreflective about who the Acehnese were or what made them distinctive. After

he met with student activists on a visit to Aceh in 1999, James Siegel (2000, 367–368) made the following observation:

> It is misleading to think of these students, for instance, as convinced Acehnese nationalists. They are not much concerned with the ethnic identity of other Indonesians, for instance, or even with others' national identity as Indonesians in opposition to themselves. They celebrate the myths of Acehnese history, such as the power of the ancient sultanate, to a lesser extent than other types of Acehnese. Their "Aceh Merdeka," independent Aceh, does not yet, at the time I write, have a shape or a contrary, only an enemy, the army, which for them is a metonymy for "Indonesia."

Siegel's observation accords with my own around this time. In my many discussions with younger activists between 1999 and 2003, it was invariably clear what they opposed (the army, Indonesia). They could talk at length about state crimes. Unlike Siegel, my impression was that they were committed nationalists, and often passionately so. They often insisted that a distinct Acehnese national identity existed, justifying a right to national self-determination. Sometimes, however, they had difficulty explaining how that Acehnese nation might be defined.

The cultural shallowness of the new nationalism followed partly from the nature of the grievances that prompted radicalization and partly from the ideological wellsprings from which it drew. Despite some claims, the Acehnese were not a group whose separatist sentiment resulted from overt ethnic discrimination. Under the New Order, the Acehnese were an accepted, and in some respects an unusually honored, component of the Indonesian nation. They had not experienced discrimination on cultural grounds. There had been no attempts to forcibly assimilate them into the dominant ethnic group, no restrictions on the use of the Acehnese language, no prohibitions on the practice of their religion.

Instead, these young activists were responding to abuses that were in a sense blind to ethnicity. The New Order regime had abused many communities and individuals around Indonesia; anger at the exploitative, corrupt, and oppressive nature of that regime had driven the Indonesia-wide democratic upsurge of 1998. Of course the human rights abuses in Aceh had been on a greater scale than those in most other places; this was due, however, to the presence of the GAM insurgency, not to special malevolence directed at the Acehnese as an ethnic group. The post-1998 activists had rarely—perhaps never—encountered ethnic prejudice in their daily lives. Instead they had been integrated smoothly into Indonesia's urban cosmopolitan culture.

These activists' discovery of Aceh's "folk" did not take the form of genteel excursions into the countryside to catalogue peasant dress, folk tales, or music,

as some nationalist intellectuals did elsewhere. Rather, they often first came into contact with rural people by way of *investigasi kasus* (case investigation) or *pendampingan* (accompaniment) when they visited villages to interview survivors of human rights abuses or to provide refugees from military violence with food and other necessities. Such activities (part of the mainstream tradition of NGO and student activism throughout Indonesia) confronted them directly with victims of military brutality. Such visits also gave many urban activists their first contact with GAM supporters and activists. It also meant that, along with their protest activity in the towns, they often personally ended up on the receiving end of harsh treatment by soldiers. In short, it was above all the experience of military violence that drove nationalist radicalization. As one student activist later put it to me, "We realized we had not been treated like members of the same nation, but like colonized people. Like foreigners in our own country" (interview with author, Jakarta, April 3, 2004).

The new nationalists made the case for independence in ways that reflected their journey of disillusionment with the Indonesian state and that were therefore shaped not by GAM's ethnonationalism but by the way in which Acehnese identity had previously been institutionalized and celebrated by that state. As will be recalled, a product of the special territory compromise had been decades of "soft" identity formation, by which the Acehnese elite justified and defended that compromise by emphasizing certain unique attributes of the Acehnese within the Indonesian nation and, especially, the service they had performed for the republic during the independence struggle of 1945–1949. Discussion of Aceh's specialness and its contribution to Indonesia had been central to local political discourse through the New Order years. This fact helps to explain the sudden transition to nationalist political mobilization and the bypassing of the phase of cultural awakening. The preparatory work of historical research, cultural celebration, and normalizing of Acehnese identity as the framework for political action had already been done, by Acehnese *Indonesian* nationalists under the previous regime.

The new activists took up themes that had been used to make the case for Aceh having a special place in Indonesia and recalibrated them to argue that Aceh and Indonesia should separate. What one observer (Birchok 2004, 31) has called the narrative of the "broken promise" was ubiquitous in the post-Soeharto protests. As countless orators put it, it was not simply that the Acehnese had been maltreated; the maltreatment was grotesque because it violated Aceh's record of sacrifice for Indonesia and all the subsequent promises of special treatment. An emphasis not only on Indonesia's brutality but also on its ingratitude, deceit, betrayal, and "tricks" became all-pervasive. Activists

took stories that had been part of the official mythology and now used them to legitimate nationalist mobilization. For instance, it will be recalled that one repeated trope in the official narrative was that the Acehnese during the independence struggle had donated large amounts of gold and other possessions to enable the government to purchase two Dakota airplanes that became the nucleus of its air force. One of the planes was proudly displayed in Banda Aceh as a symbol of Aceh's loyalty to Indonesia. After Soeharto fell, this act of generosity was typically remembered as the starting point of Indonesian perfidy: as Cut Nur Asyikin put it in one speech, "During the struggle to achieve independence, the people of Aceh donated two airplanes to the central government. But now the government is donating bullets with which to massacre the very people who had once done it such great service" (*Waspada*, August 30, 1999).

Most unaffiliated intellectuals, younger non-GAM activists, and members of the local political elite did not accept, or at least did not emphasize, GAM's successor-state argument that Indonesian sovereignty over Aceh had always been illegal. Instead they said that even if the Acehnese had voluntarily assented to incorporation with Indonesia, such a union could be invalidated by the treatment meted out to Aceh. In essence, the new activists adopted a version of what has been described as a "remedial theory of secession" (Freeman 1996, 753), in which a right of self-determination arises in cases of discrimination, genocide, or other abuse so that the state loses the moral right to govern. Hence, metaphors of Aceh as mistreated "child," "stepchild," or "wife" of Indonesia became common. Some activists suggested that after many years of enduring deceitful and violent treatment, the "wife" had valid cause to divorce the "husband."

In adopting such arguments, the new generation of activists recast the demand for independence in the language of democracy. They promoted an essentially contractual understanding of sovereignty, presenting it as residing with the people in the form of political consent, which could be withdrawn. Muhammad Nazar (2000a, 124) explained:

> Actually the problem of the integration of one *bangsa* into another is not far different from the system of a social contract. And that is quite legitimate. If the Acehnese *bangsa* wish to integrate with a state, it is quite legitimate. And so is the reverse: the decision by the Acehnese *bangsa* to erase their integration is also quite legitimate . . . the Acehnese *bangsa* only wish to re-examine their social contract with Indonesia via a referendum. They don't aim to dissolve Indonesia.

GAM had always presented independence not as a matter of political consent but as an inheritance. Accordingly, GAM leaders initially rejected the referendum idea. They said that Aceh was *already* independent and had been so since

time immemorial; Aceh simply had to realize this latent sovereignty by driving out the occupiers. As the commander of GAM's fighting forces, Abdullah Syafi'ie, put it, "Why should we hold a referendum with Java? Javanese are colonialists. Who are they to hold a referendum? We want independence and only independence" (Johanson 1999, 10).[1]

Although most of those campaigning for a referendum also wanted Aceh to become independent, the referendum demand was still a paradigm shift. SIRA and allied groups talked of a referendum as a democratic and just method to "resolve" the Aceh conflict by determining the aspirations of the population. In the words of Muhammad Nazar (2000a), the ideological conflict between the two warring sides had generated "political stagnation":

> The military is given authority by the Government to say that Aceh is a part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia that must be maintained until the last drop of blood. Meanwhile, the Free Aceh Movement, which was proclaimed by Hasan di Tiro in 1976, says that Aceh is not a part of Indonesia, meaning that Aceh must oppose every act of intervention and colonialism by other states. The consequences are certain, namely that the civilian population sheds its blood and tears, and loses its possessions. Shall we let this occur? . . . the people of Aceh are committed to a comprehensive peace process, which can only be achieved via the implementation of a referendum.

Moreover, Nazar said, self-determination is a "part of universal human rights recognized by UN resolutions, international law, and the Geneva Convention." A referendum was "not a separatist movement and is never in contravention of any law whatsoever." Even if they wanted independence, groups such as SIRA in fact called for a choice between reaffirmation, renegotiation, and cancellation of the political contract between the Acehnese and Jakarta. This was an important reformulation. Recasting Aceh's problem as a conflict between two sides that demanded a "solution" laid the ground for the settlement that was eventually reached in 2005.

Nazar and others like him made some of these statements to avoid being arrested as separatists (to no avail in Nazar's case; he was twice convicted of treason). But there was more to them than tactics. They also reflected the way in which the campaign of this new generation of activists had grown out of the wider movement for democratic reform. The Acehnese activists were closely connected to wider Indonesian student and NGO networks. Since at least the late 1980s these networks had been animated above all by commitment to human rights protection and democracy.

The new democratic outlook had important consequences. As we have seen, Hasan di Tiro had claimed a right to rule Aceh because he was descended from a man he claimed was the last head of state. GAM leaders some-

times said Aceh would be a sultanate. The younger activists repudiated the hereditary principle and stressed instead popular sovereignty and democratic mechanisms. They said that an independent Aceh would be a "democratic republic" (*South China Morning Post*, November 24, 1999). Many of the younger activists also found GAM's anti-Javanese animus unappealing. They stressed not blood and descent but the openness and cosmopolitanism of Acehnese society, including by reimagining the past of Aceh's sultanate in such terms. They rarely attached the epithet *Java* to Indonesia whenever they talked about it, and mostly avoided depicting Aceh's subjugation as ethnic dominance by the Javanese.

Becoming Nationalists

The distinction between the forward-looking and civic vision of the students and civil society activists and the atavistic ethnonationalism of GAM was not absolute. One could find ethnic chauvinists among the students and NGOs. There were also more democratically oriented individuals in GAM. As time went by there was ideological convergence between many (though not all) participants from both sides.

This convergence was first demonstrated by growing interest in Acehnese culture and history on the part of the urban activists. Before long, SIRA publications were full of reports on the glories of Aceh's past, especially on its resistance to colonialism, that were reminiscent of GAM discourse. For example, one edition of SIRA's tabloid newspaper featured pictures of Indonesian troops and military installations alongside photographs of Dutch soldiers during the Aceh war with unsubtle captions like, "Isn't it difficult to differentiate between this Dutch fort and what is in front of military bases today?" (*Suwa*, June 18–July 2, 2000, 8). Before long, younger activists were mixing "broken promise" and "successor state" arguments, despite the implicit conflict between them.

The 1999 political upsurge was also followed by an energetic Acehnese cultural revival in literature, dance, visual arts, and especially music. There was a burst of new musical production, with artists recording songs based on traditional musical styles and rhythms. They often borrowed the lyrics of old *hikayat* and sang about historical topics, as well as about contemporary problems such as the war and the suffering it caused. Some musical cassettes, video CDs, and audio CDs that were on sale openly made the case for a free Aceh and were later banned by the military because they stimulated "hatred toward the government of the Republic of Indonesia" (*Serambi Indonesia*, November 5, 2003). Rallies organized by SIRA and other groups featured performances of

traditional songs and dance, especially recitation of the *hikayat prang sabi*, with singers often moving protestors to tears with the beauty of its rhythm and the power of its lyrics.

The discovery of Acehnese history and culture, however, *followed* the politicization of the younger activists. It did not precede or explain it. For example, many student and other activists say they had never heard the *hikayat prang sabi* before becoming politically active. As one of them put it when asked why the epic became so popular, "Yes, it is surprising, because previously it was quite alien to us. In the villages people knew about it, but we had rarely heard it. But it is very moving and beautiful; it has a great value as a piece of literature, to say nothing of the historical context. It can really influence people's psychology" (Tami, interview with the author, Jakarta, April 4, 2004). Another activist, Nashruddin Abubakar, agreed that the epic was influential: "We would always recite it at demonstrations, in order to stimulate a spirit of Acehneseness and a spirit of resistance" (interview with author, Jakarta, April 4, 2004). Another recalled hearing the song for the first time when a fellow activist returned from *investigasi kasus* at a site of military abuses in North Aceh and sang it to his fellows; he had learned it in the field from GAM people (Arie Maulana, interview with author, Jakarta, April 1, 2004). Some younger activists felt it was important for them to learn more about Aceh's history, culture, and traditional symbols, such as the *hikayat;* but others spoke in instrumental terms about such matters (saying, for example, that they were useful as a means to repudiate Indonesia's claims of cultural or historical unity with Aceh but were not in themselves a foundation of nationalism). This was a cultural nationalism still in formation.

In part the convergence resulted from clandestine contact with GAM people, which typically began when urban activists made their first forays into the countryside. In 1999 I met with several student activists (all young men) who for the first time had met with GAM fighters in Aceh's hills. When I asked them how they felt about these encounters, they replied that they had stimulated their Acehnese "heroic spirit" (*semangat heroik*), a phrase I heard often in similar contexts over the following years. Other activists recalled their surprise at the erudite and open character of some of the younger GAM commanders, many of whom, it will be remembered, had been trained in the arts of propaganda in Libya and Malaysia. Civil society activists often also mentioned GAM military commander Abdullah Syafi'ie in this context. In 1999 many of them made what almost amounted to a pilgrimage to his base in rural Pidie, and afterward praised his simplicity, honesty, and democratic spirit. These encounters with the romance of the rural revolutionary were obviously deeply affecting

for many urban activists, almost as if they were meeting figures out of Aceh's legendary past. Some of the most intense meetings were held overseas, such as at workshops organized by the International Forum for Aceh (IFA)—a body established in New York City by Acehnese diasporans and human rights activists—in Washington, D.C. (April 1999 and April 2001), and in Bangkok (July 1999). At such meetings younger activists met for the first time with the older-generation GAM exiles.

Most urban groups kept a formal distance from GAM through the following years, which is hardly surprising given GAM's status as a banned insurgent group. Many NGOs that campaigned on issues such as human rights, anticorruption, or environmentalism tried to be neutral on the conflict and on independence. Because most of these NGOs relied on international donors for their funding, they were unable to express public sympathy for GAM or independence; doing so would result in immediate termination of grants.[2] A few NGOs even publicly criticized GAM for human rights abuses, and some of their members were suspicious of and hostile to the movement. This could be a risky stance to take, and some of the NGOs received threatening telephone calls or worse, intimidation.

My own impression was that most student activists and even a good proportion of those from NGOs believed in the independence cause, and many privately sympathized with GAM—at least with its goals, if not always with its methods. Behind the scenes an intense dialogue between some civil society activists and GAM commanders continued. As one senior NGO leader, Risman A. Rachman, put it to me, "NGOs were not a supporter of either side, but if the army viewed us as followers of GAM, this was simply because GAM opened access to us while the army did not. We could always meet with them, and we often tried to convince them not to use violent or harsh methods" (interview with author, Jakarta, April 1, 2004). Many NGO and student leaders would meet key GAM commanders and discuss political ideas and strategy with them, and sometimes criticize particular GAM actions, such as those that harmed civilians. Many civil society groups also enthusiastically campaigned for a peace process and endorsed the negotiations that occurred beginning in 2000, which slowly recast the Aceh conflict as one amenable to compromise.

Although most NGOs were officially neutral on independence, as time passed, some of the student activists became closer to GAM politically. SIRA especially took on the appearance of being a sort of civilian wing of GAM. Other activists gravitated toward particular regional GAM commanders whom they found to be sympathetic to democratic ideas. The convergence was accelerated by military repression; as the political space that had opened

up for civilian mobilization narrowed and then virtually disappeared, some civilian activists looked on armed struggle more favorably. Eventually, after the military emergency in May 2003, a few civilian activists fled to the hills; more went to Malaysia, where they merged into GAM networks.

Ideological convergence was a two-way process: the urban groups also influenced GAM commanders and fighters, who over time imbibed more of the democratic and human rights discourse being promoted by the civil society groups. (International influences were also important; see Chapter 8.) Most dramatically, after the 1999 protests, GAM shifted its position and gave, first, qualified and, later, enthusiastic support to the referendum idea. The movement began to recast its statements in the language of human rights protection and to depict the problem as being a conflict that required a "solution." This process resulted in GAM producing, at a meeting in Norway, the Stavanger Declaration of July 21, 2002, in which Acehnese exiles from around the world declared "that the State of Acheh practices the system of democracy." The influence of democratic thinking was made easier because after 1998 some GAM commanders were recruited from people who had urban and activist backgrounds. (For example, the commander of the Linge district of Central Aceh, Fauzan Azima, had been a journalist in Jakarta for *Inti Jaya*, a campaigning antigovernment tabloid of the late Soeharto years.) Bit by bit GAM was being transformed in a way that prepared for the settlement eventually reached in August 2005.

Repression, Autonomy, and the End of the Nationalist Moment

Why did the nationalist upsurge of 1999 fail? In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Yugoslavia, regime crises led to secessions and even to state breakup. In contrast, Aceh remained part of Indonesia. The failure was not due to weakness of the nationalist impulse. There is little doubt that, at least in the immediate post-Soeharto years, most Acehnese wished to be rid of Indonesia; even senior Indonesian officials occasionally admitted as much. One important set of factors was international; I look at these in Chapter 8. In terms of domestic dynamics there were two main factors, both largely outside the control of Acehnese nationalists.

The first factor needs little elaboration. Unlike the USSR and (to a lesser extent) Yugoslavia, Indonesia survived because there was no loss of will by state leaders and the security apparatus to enforce national unity. After the initial post-Soeharto liberalization, the public and ruling elite nationally became increasingly hostile to separatism. In part this was due to the unitarist nature of Indonesian nationalism and political structures when compared to the two

other countries. The different peoples of Indonesia were not seen as separate nationalities, nor were the regions considered separate republics, as in the USSR or Yugoslavia. There also were not any alternative imaginings of nationhood (such as those provided by Russian nationalism in the USSR and Serbian nationalism in Yugoslavia) to which political leaders and publics at the center could turn as the periphery began to fray (Cribb 2001). On the contrary, given Aceh's importance to the national birth myth, it was painful for many Indonesians to contemplate Aceh becoming independent. As Amien Rais put it, Indonesia losing Aceh would be like the country losing its head (*Serambi Indonesia*, November 16, 2000). As time passed, national leaders competed to be tough on separatism. Although successive governments still offered autonomy and intermittently negotiated with GAM, they also favored harsh measures.

As GAM consolidated, security forces had an increasingly free hand, culminating with the declaration of a military emergency in May 2003 in which TNI pledged to uproot and destroy separatism. Political conditions fluctuated (including mini-liberalizations during peace deals in 2000 and 2002–2003), but the general trend was toward greater repression. The national climate of press freedom placed some constraints on military action, meaning that some of the more gratuitous excesses of the DOM period did not recur. By the end, however, the methods were not far different from the earlier repression. Targeted killings, torture, forced relocation of village populations, mobilization of civilians in militias—all of this and more once again became part of state terror in Aceh (Human Rights Watch 2003, Amnesty International 2004).

The space for peaceful political activity that had opened in 1998–1999 soon closed. Activity that was not threatening to Indonesia's integrity (such as campaigning by anticorruption groups against local politicians) was generally still tolerated. But pro-independence activity was restricted as early as 2000, and restrictions on criticism of the military soon followed. In November 2000, SIRA planned a pro-referendum rally in Banda Aceh to commemorate the massive rally held a year earlier. The police declared the rally illegal, and troops fired on convoys of civilians trying to make their way into the city. The Aceh branch of the National Human Rights Commission said that thirty people were killed (*Kompas*, November 17, 2000); nobody responsible was punished. Muhammad Nazar was arrested in the same month and later charged and convicted for "spreading hatred." Army officers, viewing all critics as part of GAM's "clandestine front," increasingly stigmatized and punished students and NGO activists, with the result that many were killed or abducted, or disappeared. Forty-five activists were arrested within a week of the declaration of the military emergency in May 2003 (*Jakarta Post*, May 27, 2003).

A second explanation for the end of the nationalist moment is found in the behavior of the Acehnese political elite. A compelling explanation for state disintegration in the USSR and Yugoslavia was that local communist party bosses transformed themselves, sometimes almost overnight, into nationalist political entrepreneurs who led secessionist struggles (Snyder 2000). In Aceh, local elites wavered during the nationalist upsurge of 1999 but fell back into the Indonesian fold. Instead of leading the fight for independence, they tried to find a compromise solution based on "special autonomy" that would recast Aceh's relations with Jakarta. In the end, no significant figure from Aceh's governing elite, nor any prominent *ulama* or intellectual, transformed himself into a campaigner for independence. Only a few second-ranking intellectuals, journalists, and the like joined GAM.

As already seen, Aceh was ruled during the New Order by civilian technocrats with a developmentalist agenda. Their social base grew during those years as a result of the growth of government employment, a business elite, and an urban middle class (McGibbon 2006, 328). The liberalization that followed the fall of Soeharto expanded this local political elite, with various intellectuals, businesspeople, and Islamic preachers who had previously been marginal now becoming leaders of political parties or prominent commentators in public debate. The two Islamic-based political parties, PPP and PAN, were especially important after they emerged, along with Golkar, as the leading forces in the provincial legislature after the June 1999 national elections. Some leaders of these parties had family backgrounds that linked them to Aceh's past Islamic political traditions.[3]

There was no shortage of anti-Jakarta sentiment in this social layer around 1999–2000. When I first conducted fieldwork in Aceh in 1999, many senior academics and politicians privately said that Aceh would be better off independent. Some tried to ride the wave of anti-Jakarta feeling. For instance, from mid-1998 on, PPP leaders were among the most visible and energetic national campaigners on human rights in Aceh. One particularly fiery orator was Ghazali Adnan Abbas, who in campaign speeches compared Soeharto to Pol Pot, saying that, like Cambodia, Aceh had its "killing fields" (*Serambi Indonesia*, May 24, 1999). Addressing more than ten thousand party supporters in February 1999, he played on the word *merdeka*—which in the Indonesian language means both "freedom" and "independence" and which was central to GAM demands—saying that Aceh had been "free," as part of Indonesia, for fifty-three years, but only "on paper." "Because of that, starting from now we must struggle for Aceh's freedom from all sorts of hurtful and protracted repression." He then went on to list six freedoms, including freedom to imple-

ment *shari'a* and to enjoy Aceh's own natural resources, and freedom from "fear, violent acts and barbarism." He warned that if these goals were not achieved, the people of Aceh would have to struggle "until their last drop of blood," albeit peacefully, because they had only two choices: "live nobly or die as martyrs" (*Serambi Indonesia*, February 8, 1999).

Ghazali was unusually outspoken, but his comment was typical of the Acehnese elite in that it still envisaged freedom in an Indonesian context. Members of this elite were heirs to the old tradition linking Aceh to Indonesian identity, and they were thoroughly integrated into Indonesia's ruling structures and networks. They often had been educated outside Aceh, usually in Medan or Jakarta; they were related by marriage to elite families from elsewhere in the country; they kept houses in Jakarta or Medan, and were frequent visitors to both places. Identification of the Acehnese political elite with Indonesia was reinforced by one particular feature of post-Soeharto institutional reform: the revised political party law did not allow local parties to compete in elections. Instead, only parties that could show they had active branches in half of the provinces in Indonesia and half of the districts in those provinces could do so. The aim was to prevent the emergence of regional parties that might speed the process of national disintegration. Although many branches of national parties were formed in Aceh, their leaders were subordinate to national party chiefs in Jakarta.

The local political elite had been the main proponents of the discourse of Acehnese specialness during the New Order years, so it was not surprising that they became leading advocates of the betrayal narrative afterward. Their main theme was the need for a renewal of the historic bonds tying Aceh to Indonesia. As an illustration, take the 1999 book *Aceh Bersimbah Darah* (Blood-spattered Aceh), which was coauthored by the head of PAN in Aceh, Sayed Mudhahar Ahmad, a former *bupati* of South Aceh who had fallen foul of the Soeharto government over logging concessions (Kell 1995, 38). It became an instant best-seller because of its harrowing accounts of army atrocities. Its main theme was that the Acehnese had "been continually slandered with the accusation that they wish to separate themselves from their Indonesian integrity" (Al Chaidar, Hamid, and Dinamika 1999, xvii). The book detailed at length various betrayals of the Acehnese by the New Order government, especially human rights abuses; but, as did Ghazali, it presented them as betrayals that could be resolved in an Indonesian framework. The key was to implement properly the steps proposed four decades earlier for resolving the Darul Islam revolt "and allow an Acehnese self-determination . . . without needing to separate from the Republic which has long been struggled for by

the Islamic *umma* and *mujahid* from many other regions" (Al Chaidar, Hamid, and Dinamika 1999, 44).

During the 1999 protests, although most members of the Acehnese political elite, including governing officials and the major parties, issued statements supporting a referendum, they did so mostly to placate protestors. When the peak of protests passed, they quickly backtracked. Within a few days of signing a statement endorsing a referendum, for instance, Governor Syamsuddin Mahmud was stressing that a referendum did not have to include an independence option, and he reacted angrily when a journalist questioned his commitment to Indonesian nationalism (*Kompas*, November 16, 1999). The speaker of the East Aceh DPRD, Teuku Husni, explained the political logic when he visited Jakarta to fulfill his promise to seek a referendum from national leaders. He told Amien Rais that there was something like a "running race" between the government and GAM, but "the government is not running as fast as GAM" (*Kompas*, November 5, 1999).

Such people were inclined to a practical outlook. As bureaucrats or intellectuals, their instinct was to seek legal and institutional solutions. They also saw themselves as being well placed to renegotiate the terms of Aceh's relationship with Jakarta, as intermediaries between the national government and the restive population. The first step toward compromise came in September 1999 when national parliament passed that year's Law Number 44, on Aceh's "specialness" (*Keistimewaan Aceh*). Acehnese legislators from PPP played a key role in initiating this law; it was approved by the last Soeharto-era parliament during its final weeks. It was a brief document, consisting of thirteen articles that acknowledged special status in religious life, custom, education, and "the role of *ulama* in the determination of regional policy." Next, local politicians drafted the more ambitious Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD, or Peaceful State of Aceh) bill and presented it to the national legislature in March 2000. The bill declared the sovereignty of Aceh within the Indonesian republic and gave wide-ranging authority to the province. It allowed Aceh its own symbols of statehood, including a flag and representative offices overseas. Acehnese would become an official language, equal to Indonesian. The state would be sovereign over both private and public law, using *shari'a* as its base. Its police force and judiciary would be independent from national institutions. Government would be headed by a *wali nanggroe* (guardian of the state—the phrase used by GAM in reference to Hasan di Tiro), who would be elected directly by Aceh's voters. Aceh would contribute only 10 percent of income from economic activity in its territory to the central government. Acehnese politicians presented the bill to national leaders as being "within the corridor of

the Unitary State" (*Kompas*, April 7, 2000). To Acehnese audiences they said, in the words of a provincial legislator, that the bill offered a kind of "internal independence" (*merdeka ke dalam; Waspada*, November 4, 2000). Some Acehnese members of the national parliament added that they wanted the bill to accommodate GAM directly in Aceh's new political structures.[4]

Central government officials and nationalist politicians in Jakarta eventually approved a watered-down version of the bill in 2001. Even so, unlike the regional autonomy laws of 1999, which weakened provincial governments by devolving powers to lower-level districts, the Special Autonomy Law (Law Number 18 of 2001) preserved the province as the regional focus of authority. It provided for the return of 70 percent of petroleum and natural gas revenues to the province (in contrast to only 15 and 30 percent, respectively, in most other regions). On security matters, it gave the governor authority to veto the appointment of the regional chief of police, who was obliged to coordinate security policy with the governor. Police recruitment would take account of "local law, culture, and custom." The law provided for a *wali nanggroe* as a symbol of "culture and custom," and gave the province authority to implement *shari'a*.

The law is not best viewed as a literal or direct response to GAM and its demands, even if the insurgency was obviously a chief motivating factor. Instead, many features of the law, such as renaming Aceh a state (*nanggroe*) and recognizing the special role of the *ulama*, were demands made by Darul Islam. *Shari'a* was also central to the special autonomy formula, as it had been in the 1950s but not in the recent unrest. In contrast, the law had almost nothing to say about human rights, which had been a chief theme of recent protests. In short, the Special Autonomy Law can best be seen as formalization, forty years late, of the agreement that ended the earlier uprising. The discourse about Aceh's specialness, inherited from the 1950s, had proved so resilient that it largely determined the way that an attempted solution to the post-Soeharto Aceh conflict was framed and conceptualized. If GAM, with its emphasis on the precolonial glories of the sultanate and the struggle against the Dutch, appeared trapped by history, much could be said for the Acehnese elite and their allies in the national government.

In this context, it is not surprising that special autonomy failed to resolve the conflict. Instead, it was greeted with widespread cynicism. Part of the problem was precisely that officials who promoted the law used a language of Acehnese specialness that was reminiscent of the New Order years. Local elites in 1998–1999 had themselves popularized the idea that Aceh had previously been betrayed by Jakarta; they now found it difficult to convince the

public that special autonomy was not simply the latest trick. More important, the local elite's legitimacy was being dramatically undermined. Squeezed by the escalating conflict, most local politicians abandoned the optimism and critical tone they had adopted in 1999. They lacked electoral legitimacy. A boycott and GAM violence had produced very low turnout throughout Aceh in the 1999 general election; in the three districts where GAM was strongest, turnout was miniscule (in North Aceh it was only 1.4 percent; in Pidie, 11 percent; and in East Aceh, 50 percent) (*Kompas*, July 14, 1999; Aspinall 1999). GAM fighters denounced anyone who worked in Indonesian structures as traitors, and the local government apparatus ceased functioning in most rural areas (see Chapter 6). A few local politicians were killed; others were abducted by GAM fighters or received death threats. As the army regained influence, it also pressured local politicians to endorse security operations. This effort peaked in 2003 when martial law gave Aceh's military commander supreme political authority in the province. By this stage, most local politicians had fallen behind the military's campaign against separatism. Unable to influence events, Aceh's political elite became dispirited and demoralized.[5]

Because of the armed conflict, the Special Autonomy Law meanwhile could not be implemented so as to alleviate social and economic grievances. There was an influx of additional funds into provincial and district government budgets, but these funds could not be used to pay for reconstruction activities in violence-afflicted districts. Instead, there was the rise of what Rodd McGibbon (2006) describes as a kleptocratic tendency in the political elite. A well-connected businessman from the Soeharto regime's old Golkar party, Abudullah Puteh, succeeded in paying off enough members of the provincial parliament to ensure his election as governor in November 2000. (He was later arrested and convicted on charges of skimming off money from the provincial budget.) Scandals proliferated and the province gained a reputation as the most corrupt in Indonesia. In such circumstances, the local elite lost the authority they needed to promote special autonomy as a solution to the conflict.

In fact, the compromise hammered out between Acehnese politicians and the national government in the Special Autonomy Law proved to be not very different from the final political settlement later negotiated in 2005. When the law was passed in 2001, however, GAM leaders were still optimistic that they could win independence, and they dismissed the law. One leader, Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba, likened special autonomy to a "toy car" and said that Aceh may have asked for such a plaything when still a "child" in the 1950s, but after the passage of so much time and so much mistreatment, it now wanted the real thing. "Toy

cars are only for children, they are not suitable for adults" (*Kompas*, April 26, 2001). Prominent GAM commander Ishak Daud had a similar analysis: "Special autonomy and *shari'a* are two things the Acehnese people demanded almost 60 years ago and most of those who aired those demands have already passed away, while the present generation has forgotten it since the government rejected it" (*Jakarta Post*, October 9, 2003).

Conclusion: The Contingency of Nationalism

In the wake of the collapse of the Soeharto regime, civilian politics in Aceh were fluid. For a fleeting moment, two civilian groups—the younger students and NGO activists on the one hand and the established political elite on the other—seemed to be converging in a movement favoring an independence referendum.

The first group underwent radicalization, initially demanding a referendum for tactical reasons. When the government's attitude hardened, a few backed down; others became Acehnese nationalists of a more fundamental type. The political elite's flirtation with the independence cause was more superficial and short-lived. Pro-referendum mobilization and the growth of GAM made it briefly appear that some of them might defect to the secessionist cause, but almost none did. Instead, most tried to reposition themselves as intermediaries between the aroused population and the central government; to do so, they proposed special autonomy as a compromise solution. As the military reasserted itself, most members of the Acehnese elite retreated further, and by 2003 were endorsing calls for harsh action against separatists.

Overall this chapter reminds us of the contingency of nationalism, the role of the state in giving rise to it and what King (2004, 442) calls the "constitutive power of the event." The Indonesian state had prepared the ground for the nationalist mobilization of 1999, first by creating a store of grievance in the population that was ready to explode once political conditions allowed, and second by naturalizing Acehnese identity as the basis on which this mobilization would occur. The result was that participants expressed their commitment to the nationalist cause as a response to Indonesian betrayals, reflecting how steeped they were in official discourse about Aceh and its place in the republic. For most of them, Acehnese nationalism was not something that had been long-suppressed and was simply awaiting this moment to erupt. Instead, it was a *product* of the mobilizations rather than a driver of them.

The period discussed in this chapter was more than simply a failed nationalist moment. It also had important legacies. The way that many Acehnese in

1999 had so rapidly discarded their previous identification with Indonesia suggested that, if conditions were right, it might be possible for them to imagine a renewed relationship, albeit on different terms. As we shall see, the rearticulation of Aceh's struggle in terms of democratic rights and opposition to violence that occurred in 1998–2000 ultimately allowed many Acehnese to do this. Moreover, the early attempts at compromise and autonomy paved the way for the later political settlement; but for this settlement to be reached, GAM had first to recognize that it had come to the end of the military road.

6

Violence, Money, Insurgency

GAM's Third Revolt, 1998–2005

> GAM's methods were the methods of the TNI. They didn't go far to learn them. They learned from Indonesia, from their brothers.
>
> *Yusuf Pase, a Lhokseumawe human rights activist, in relation to GAM fundraising methods (interview with author, February 19, 2007)*

In this chapter, we return the focus to GAM, which also resurrected itself in the post-Soeharto years when the protest movement discussed in the last chapter peaked. GAM achieved its greatest strength in those years, far surpassing earlier manifestations. It recruited rapidly, raised huge sums of money, and bought many guns. GAM leaders promised that Aceh would soon be independent. Its combatants were a more effective fighting force than ever before. They briefly controlled much of rural Aceh. A bitter, dirty war swept the territory.

The insurgency peaked in 2000–2001. By early 2000, the central government had recognized GAM's strength and was negotiating with its leaders. The movement used the "humanitarian pause" in mid-2000 to expand its influence. After this ceasefire broke down, GAM was gradually forced onto the defensive. It managed a major propaganda victory in early 2001 when it forced ExxonMobil to close its gas operations for four months. Beginning in mid-2001, the renewed dirty war slowly turned the tide back in the government's favor. GAM fighters suffered no decisive defeats, but they were driven further into Aceh's rural hinterland. A larger offensive by the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI, Indonesian National Military) under martial law from May 2003 further weakened GAM and reestablished government control in most of Aceh.

The task of describing the insurgency between 1998 and 2005 is made easier because several other works focus on this period.[1] They make it possible simply to sketch the chief events here and reserve the rest of the chapter's focus for aspects of GAM's strategy, behavior, and organization that are important for the overall analysis presented in this book. To understand the insurgency, it is necessary to go beyond the approach of earlier chapters, which explained how the conflict began by focusing on grievances, nationalist ideology, and social structures. In this chapter, we look at how conflict *escalated* and was *sustained* by exploring the mechanics of violence, recruitment, and fundraising. This focus involves moving from the brightly illuminated world of nationalist ideology, in which the Acehnese and their enemies are imagined as clearly delineated, into the shadow world of war, guns, and money. Here guerillas and their enemies were locked not only in mortal combat but also in an intimate embrace.

In making this shift, the study draws on recent comparative literature on civil wars. Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, numerous scholars and journalists have made the case that we are in an era of "new wars" (Kaldor 1999) in which conflicts are not driven by ideology, identity, and grievance but instead "are characteristically criminal, depoliticized, private, and predatory" (Kalyvas 2001, 100). Instead of a battle of ideologies, the new vision sees a Hobbesian world where warlords and criminal gangs battle for private gain. John Mueller (2000, 43), for example, writes of the "banality of ethnic war" and suggests that wars widely understood to have been motivated by ethnic and nationalistic animosities, such as those in Bosnia and Rwanda, have in practice been the work of small gangs of criminals, hooligans, and other opportunists. In such cases, he argues, "nationalism was not so much the impelling force as simply the characteristic around which the marauders happened to have arrayed themselves." Emblematic of the shift in approach was a rash of new research prompted especially by works by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler who, on the basis of statistical analysis, argued that civil wars are best explained not by grievance but by greed, because what counts is availability of resources, especially natural resources, to finance rebellion. In some versions of their thesis, *greed* is meant literally and refers to rapacity and profiteering by rebel groups; the deeper argument is that what counts is *feasibility* (Collier and Hoeffler 2005, 629) in that rebellions can be sustained only when there are resources to fund them.

This shift in the research agenda involves two kinds of claims. The first claim is empirical but contested: that the end of the Cold War indeed heralded a substantive shift in the nature of civil war, with ideology giving way to predation and warlordism. Not all researchers agree that such a shift took

place (for example, Kalyvas 2001). The paradigmatic resource war occurred in the early 1990s in Sierra Leone, where extraction of alluvial diamonds both motivated and funded the rebels, and where conflict resulted in extreme depredations against civilians. Other wars in the same period, such as the ultimately successful secessionist struggle in Eritrea, involved greater discipline among rebel forces and stronger ethnic solidarity or ideological mission. The second claim is concerned with the methods used to study rebellions: it has been proposed that researchers should place greater emphasis on the economic foundations of conflict. This approach often involved statistical analysis of large datasets to find correlations between violence and economic variables, an effort underpinned by the assumptions of rational actor theory, which view individuals and groups as inherently interest maximizing. Even beyond these disciplinary confines, however, there has been growing interest in the political economy of conflict and what one author (King 2004, 434) calls "a micropolitical turn in the study of social violence." This new interest in the microfoundations of violence has translated *inter alia* into studies of the local rivalries and cleavages that infuse civil wars, and of the logic of retribution in them (Kalyvas 2003, 2006), the techniques and effects of rebel financing, and the mechanisms and patterns of rebel recruitment (see, for example, Gates 2002; Weinstein 2005, 2007).

These debates have been echoed, if faintly, in the literature on Aceh. As we have seen, GAM depicted its struggle as a noble effort to liberate the Acehnese nation while government spokespeople denigrated it as being motivated by criminality. In the secondary literature, Kirsten E. Schulze is the scholar who has most thoroughly documented GAM abuses, including "the kidnapping and killing of civilians and the burning of schools, local government offices and health centres, as well as a campaign of ethnic cleansing waged against Javanese migrants" (Schulze 2005b; see also 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2006). American journalist William Nessen (2005, 2006) was the most spirited in defense of GAM's "national liberation" struggle, arguing that GAM survived because of its popular support and because it committed few serious violations against civilians.

In surveying GAM's insurgency after 1999, this chapter aims to explain the role of violence and money in shoring up that insurgency. It delineates four distinct patterns of GAM violence (instrumental, expressive, retributive, and predatory) and investigates how the movement raised its finances. The analysis suggests that neat distinctions between *greed* and *grievance*, or between *predatory* and *popular* insurgency, do not readily capture the complexity and ambiguity of Aceh's civil war. Analysis is difficult partly because the meaning of virtually

every violent incident is disputed—a phenomenon common to most ethnic conflicts (Brass 1997)—and because GAM, like most insurgent movements, relied on both coercion and ideological appeals in dealing with civilians. Some clarity is provided by noting the social distance that separated GAM from its potential victims; GAM meant different things to different people. However, in the shadow economy that grew up around the conflict, GAM could also mean different things to the *same* people; the insurgents were often connected beneath the surface by economic ties to people who were, at least in public, its enemies.

Mysterious Violence

In 1998–1999, as happened ten years earlier, the first sign of GAM's revival was propaganda. In the final months of 1998, GAM orators began to give *khotbah* (sermons) in villages and small towns throughout Aceh. According to one journalist, "Hundreds, sometimes thousands, of Acehnese gathered in mosques and open-air courtyards to hear rebel accounts of Aceh's glorious independent history and its wealthy future once it is liberated from 'Javanese colonizers'" (Cohen 1999). Other public displays of GAM strength included rallies in which sometimes hundreds of youths on motorcycles paraded through villages or small towns, displaying the GAM flag. People involved recall that it was easy to elicit an enthusiastic response from villagers at this time, and they quickly abandoned efforts at secrecy. Sayed Mustafa, for instance, recalls speaking in front of a crowd of ten thousand people in Beutong, West Aceh (interview with author, Jeuram, February 12, 2007), and individuals in other districts recall similarly large events.

Quiet propaganda quickly gave way to violence. Sometimes the transition was abrupt, as when government troops fired on crowds participating in protest marches after GAM sermons, or when crowds abducted or even killed military agents trying to observe such events, which led to military reprisals. It did not take long after the fall of the Soeharto regime for violence to resume on a mass scale in Aceh. According to one Acehnese human rights group, 534 people were killed and 144 went missing between the end of Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM) in August 1998 and the beginning of December 1999—a little less than half of the group's estimate of deaths during the whole DOM period, from 1989 to 1998 (*Kompas*, December 24, 1999).

Much of the initial violence was mysterious and confusing, both for local people and for outside observers. Some of it—notably attacks on military posts or assassinations of military officers—could easily be pinned on GAM fighters. Other violent acts were known to be the work of security forces.

However, there was also much anonymous violence—attacks by individuals or small groups of men who did not identify themselves. Press coverage from 1998 to 2000 presents a litany of seemingly inexplicable and random attacks: village chiefs assassinated, farmers murdered as they returned from their fields, Javanese traders with their throats cut found by the roadside, families burned alive in their homes. A wave of *petrus* (mysterious shootings) in late 1998 and early 1999, for example, targeted Acehnese civilians who had assisted the military in counterinsurgency operations during DOM—*cuak* (spies or informants), as they were popularly known in Aceh.

Uncertainty about precisely who had perpetrated many of these violent acts remained a feature of the conflict until the end and, especially early in the post-Soeharto period, generated speculation and conspiracy theories. For example, some observers blamed the military for the deaths of *cuak*, suggesting that this was a way to cover up past abuses in anticipation of possible human rights investigations. A series of assassinations of local intellectuals and politicians prompted different views. Local activists and GAM members blamed the security forces, the security forces blamed GAM, and others suggested that the killings were linked to failed business deals, extortion, or other criminal activities.

A common theme of public discussion was that provocateurs (*provokator*) were responsible for much of the violence, as they were elsewhere in Indonesia. When security officials blamed provocateurs, they usually meant common criminals, and they repeated their descriptions from a decade earlier of the insurgency as criminally motivated. Indonesia's national police chief, for example, said that much of the violence was the work of gangsters from Medan disguising themselves as GAM (*Kompas*, December 24, 1999).

When civilians spoke of provocateurs, however, they were usually blaming the military. The theory here was that soldiers were engineering disorder in order to justify their continued presence in Aceh. These analyses became very influential and have found their way into the scholarly literature, with Elizabeth Drexler (2008, 9), for example, asserting that Aceh shows that "in some postcolonial states, the central government may actually create, arm, and exercise some control over key elements of the opposing guerilla forces, both to discredit the actual advocates of regional autonomy, who are often nonviolent in principle and practice, and to terrorize the civilian population in the region and provoke a 'security' emergency." Because these theories became so influential in analyses of the Aceh conflict, it is useful to deal with them briefly before moving on to describe GAM's activities in detail. In my view, the provocation and conspiracy analyses go too far, although they do contain some kernels of truth.

There are several reasons that such explanations have become influential. First, as we shall see later, there were indeed instances when government forces and GAM fighters in the field cooperated, and there were strong practical reasons that they did so. Such cooperation fuelled conspiracy theories but it was usually motivated by mundane considerations of money and survival rather than by hidden military plans to foment conflict.

Second, there was indeed plenty of evidence that intelligence services tried to plant informants and agents in GAM and other antigovernment movements.[2] Some people who spoke in the media in the name of GAM in 1999 were apparently intelligence agents. One such individual was known as Tgk Maulida. In 1999 he was frequently quoted in the local press as a GAM spokesperson; according to several informants, GAM fighters believed he was working with the army's special forces and several times tried to kill him. Another important figure with a similar history was Arjuna, who had been trained in Libya and was an important GAM commander in the DOM period but fled to Malaysia in the early 1990s and became disillusioned with the GAM leadership, eventually becoming a military agent. Ultimately he was abducted and killed, presumably by GAM fighters (*Tempo*, May 27–June 2, 2003). Such stories fed rumors that GAM was a creation of the intelligence agencies or was manipulated by it. In fact, much military intelligence work was clumsy. It was thus no secret that Fauzi Hasbi, an important early player in GAM and author of many diatribes against Hasan di Tiro under the *nom de plume* Abu Jihad, worked for Badan Intelijen Negara (BIN, the State Intelligence Agency). Former GAM combatants whom I have interviewed say they knew there were many attempts by military intelligence to infiltrate their movement. They designed measures to prevent this from happening, including insisting that former soldiers who joined GAM (and there were many of these) had to participate in attacks on their former comrades-in-arms shortly after doing so. In sum, although it is almost certain that many military agents worked in GAM or on its fringes, it seems likely that their primary task was to collect information and create disruptions and confusion within the movement rather than to promote wider unrest or rebellion directed against Jakarta.

A third, and perhaps most important, reason that provocation theories gained such purchase was the confusing and deceitful nature of the war. Perpetrators on both sides routinely disguised their identities to avoid blame for their actions. Sometimes they tried to blame their violent acts on adversaries. There were also many opportunists who used the cover of the conflict to engage in violence for private purposes; some of these opportunists were affiliated with the security forces, or with GAM; others may have been freelancers.

We should not, however, overstate the mysteriousness of the violence, even in 1998–2000, or make it too central to our analysis. In other parts of Indonesia around this time, conspiracy theories also abounded as Indonesians struggled to comprehend the communal violence occurring in some parts of the archipelago. Thus, a wave of murders in the Banyuwangi region of East Java prompted fevered analysis about "ninja" conspiracies and military plots to discredit Islamic forces, and some of these made their way into scholarly publications. When a careful researcher finally examined each instance of violence in Banyuwangi, he discovered that they all involved locals turning on unpopular community members; there simply was no plot (Herriman 2007). At the time, little of this local information made it into the regional and national press, where the conspiracy theorists formulated and propagated their views.

In Aceh the pattern was similar: even when perpetrators of violent acts were not identified in press reports, those affected generally knew who was responsible, or they could guess. (If perpetrators spoke Indonesian rather than the Acehnese language, for example, it was generally believed they were from the security forces.) Moreover, journalists feared reprisals if they identified those who were responsible, and they often did not publish all they knew. As a result the *orang tak dikenal* (unknown person) became the ubiquitous culprit in media reports. What was generally well understood in the villages was seen by outsiders as a wave of incomprehensible violence. Meanwhile, many of the urban intellectuals who dominated media discourse knew little about GAM and feared it, and they were also hostile to the military and habituated to living under an all-controlling military regime. This combination created the context in which theories alleging military manipulation of the rebellion took hold. The conspiracy theories were a product of the conflict; they are not a good explanation for it.

Most important, we now know that from late 1998 on, GAM was reconsolidating as a guerilla force, and over the course of 1999 what had begun as amorphous violence took the shape of a reviving insurgency. Many instances of violence that at the time were mysterious, and often the subject of conspiracy theories, can now be explained in this light. Thus, I have spoken to many GAM fighters who now freely admit that their own forces were responsible for killings of alleged *cuak* in 1998 and 1999, or for school burnings (another action that prompted much public speculation about who was responsible).

GAM's Second Resurrection

Even by late 1999, it was obvious that a revived and increasingly well-organized insurgency was gathering steam. The military itself was by this time admitting that the situation was out of control. One senior officer complained that in

Aceh the troops' "hands and feet were tied" and they were "psychologically disturbed" because "whenever they go outside they can be killed or kidnapped" (*Waspada*, November 23, 1999). A little later the same man stated that "the situation in Aceh now is not safe as the rebels have already taken control of Aceh. . . . They are present in every corner in Aceh" (Reuters, December 1, 1999). I have since interviewed several military officers who served in Aceh during this time. They admit that they found it impossible to prevent the spread of GAM guerilla activity. They often blame the transfer of troops in 1999 to East Timor and other trouble spots in Indonesia, which resulted in their numbers in Aceh being depleted. They also complain about the newly democratic political context and the public scrutiny that officers now faced about human rights abuses—factors that some officers say constrained their response to the insurgency.

By mid- to late 1999, in some areas it appeared that the insurgency was fusing with the local society. Many journalists reported instances of GAM fighters operating openly, often within a few hundred meters of military posts. Local boys kept watch on roads and acted as guides and go-betweens. Handheld radio transmitters and mobile telephones became important weapons of war, allowing GAM to keep a close watch on military movements. A huge number of village people became GAM tax collectors, lookouts, couriers, or paramedics. Many more provided shelter, food, or money to fighters; others gave passive support by not reporting them to the authorities.

A striking difference from earlier periods was that GAM was spreading into parts of Aceh where it had previously been weak. The east coast, especially the densely populated districts of Pidie, Bireuen (established as a separate district in 1999), North Aceh, and East Aceh, remained the insurgency's main base. The districts of West, Central, Greater, and South Aceh, however, had now also become major sites of guerilla warfare and saw some of the bitterest fighting and the worst abuses. In fact, the movement had now established a presence in every part of Aceh, from the district of Southeast Aceh, where the Acehnese ethnic group was relatively weak, to the capital, Banda Aceh.

As GAM's strength grew, state institutions faltered. In late 1999 and over the following years, security officials spoke of local government being in a state of "vacuum" or "paralysis." GAM fighters burned down many government offices and warned civil servants not to work. Officials who could flee did so. Non-Acehnese and senior officials tried to leave Aceh altogether; others retreated from villages or small towns to district capitals. In late 1999, even district offices ceased to function in the areas worst hit by the insurgency. A much larger number of subdistrict offices closed down. Some *camat* (sub-

district heads) tried to perform their duties from their homes, but much ordinary government business ceased. The legal system was hit hard; judges and prosecutors fled, closing most courts. The meltdown was also severe in the villages. In October 1999, for instance, it was reported that 600 of 948 village heads in the district of Pidie had resigned and returned to their superiors the stamps they used to officiate documents (*Waspada*, October 1, 1999).

GAM stepped into the gap. The movement had its own "civilian" administration, with a "governor" heading each of Aceh's main territories, and subordinate officials down to the level of village head, or *keuchik* (Schulze 2004, 11–12). In early 1999 there were reports that villagers were going to GAM officials to do business they had formerly conducted in government offices: registering land sales, resolving minor disputes, and even obtaining identity cards. In some areas, couples no longer formalized their weddings at local offices of religious affairs (many of which were burnt out); instead, GAM-appointed *kadi*, selected from among local religious teachers, officiated at ceremonies and issued marriage licenses (*Kontras*, November 1–7, 2000; June 6–12, 2001).

In many places, Indonesia's civilian infrastructure did not so much disintegrate as defect. In the villages, most of the *keuchik* who resigned their government commissions simply switched their allegiance to GAM and now issued documents in the name of the State of Aceh. Even more common, they simply served two masters, taking their meager salaries and giving the appearance of obedience when government troops appeared, but at other times obeying local GAM commanders. *Keuchik* were particularly likely to defect because violence was worst in the rural areas and they often knew personally, or were related to, GAM fighters. The situation was similar for some officials in subdistrict and district capitals. Although defection was not so open at this level, there were many clandestine links. GAM leaders routinely claimed that most Acehnese civil servants sympathized with their struggle; TNI officers also often warned that even senior bureaucrats were assisting GAM. Such talk became a cacophony during the military emergency in May 2003. Military officers warned that they were targeting not only GAM in the mountains but also "tie-wearing GAM" (*Waspada*, June 11, 2003) in the towns. In a series of public ceremonies, officers required civil servants to pledge loyalty to Indonesia. Speakers at such events often berated their audiences, with some officers telling attendees they could no longer work for the government while deep down being loyal to GAM.

We should not, however, exaggerate the influence of GAM's civilian infrastructure. GAM provided government without governance. Apart from giving its imprimatur to community transactions, and sometimes punishing people

for petty theft or other misdemeanors, GAM provided few services to the population. It did not build or repair roads or irrigation systems, provide relief for impoverished citizens, or promote economic activity. This absence of services was partly due to the movement's lack of a vision for remaking Acehnese society beyond ending Indonesian rule. GAM leaders were also preoccupied with the military struggle. As the military began to reassert itself, GAM civilian officials were unable to operate openly, yet the movement could still threaten government civil servants. The result was that for much of 1999–2003, government was simply paralyzed in much of Aceh.

GAM's core was its military structure, known before 2002 as Angkatan Gerakan Atjeh Merdeka (AGAM, the Free Aceh Movement Armed Forces); after 2002 it was renamed Teuntara Neugara Atjeh (TNA, Armed Forces of the State of Aceh). As it had been in the past, GAM's military structure was organized hierarchically and territorially, with Aceh divided into seventeen territories (*wilayah*), each roughly equivalent to a *kabupaten* (district) in the Indonesian system, and with forces in each territory under the command of a *panglima wilayah* (territorial commander). In a pyramidal arrangement, under the *panglima wilayah* were sixty-eight *panglima muda* (junior commanders), each responsible for a *daerah* (region), of which there were four in each *wilayah*. Beneath the *panglima muda* were 272 *panglima sagoe*, each of whom was responsible for several villages. Unlike in the past, the commanders now knew their neighbors' identities.

There was an overall commander of the armed forces in Aceh: Abdullah Syafi'ie until his death in January 2002, then Muzakkir Manaf. The *panglima wilayah* were supposed to coordinate with the commander, who also had the authority to cancel operations. The seventeen *panglima wilayah* also coordinated directly with the movement's leaders in Sweden (Schulze 2004, 13), especially Malik Mahmud (GAM's minister of state until 2002, when he became prime minister). (Hasan di Tiro had suffered a debilitating stroke in 1997 and played little part in day-to-day leadership.) However, even Malik Mahmud acknowledged that the leaders in Sweden did little more than give general policy outlines (interview with author, Stockholm, July 4, 2002). In practical matters such as planning attacks, fundraising, directing fighters' movements, and the like, the *panglima wilayah* were effectively autonomous. Even at the *sagoe* level there was great freedom of movement: "It is at this level where the TNA's command structure is highly factionalized and the troops most undisciplined. . . . Actions carried out for hard-line ideological reasons or indeed for purely economic gains of individuals, cells, or factions are sometimes at odds with directives of the top leadership" (Schulze 2004, 12–13).

A reorganization (designed by Irwandi Yusuf) of the military structure in 2002 was intended to "increase discipline" and "reduce criticisms" of the movement by reducing the role of the *sagoe* and shifting the locus of military operations to the *daerah* level. Henceforth the *sagoe* commanders were supposed to be confined to a "territorial" role: providing logistical support, coordinating off-duty fighters, caring for the sick and injured, and the like. The reorganization was also meant to enforce stricter division between military and civilian functions, with armed fighters no longer authorized to collect "taxes" (Irwandi Yusuf, interview with author, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006). The pattern often broke down in practice, and fighters from various parts of Aceh interviewed for this book indicated that the *sagoe* remained the main locus of activity, because it was their connections with the community that were closest.

In 2001 most estimates of GAM's guerilla force were in the vicinity of about fifteen thousand to twenty-seven thousand men (International Crisis Group 2001b, 7). Irwandi Yusuf said that later it could have been a hundred thousand if all the "auxiliaries" were counted (interview with author, August 17, 2006). What really mattered was the number of modern weapons, and although estimates here also varied, most put the figure at any one time at no more than four to six thousand. Indonesian military estimates of GAM's strength fluctuated widely. In early 2002, for instance, the Aceh military commander estimated that GAM had seven to ten operatives in every village in Aceh (*Waspada*, February 26, 2002), which would have meant a total force of fifty thousand. On the eve of its major offensive in May 2003, the army said there were five thousand GAM fighters (*Jakarta Post*, April 16, 2003); but as more GAM operatives were captured or killed or surrendered, the estimate grew retrospectively (for example, to eighty-five hundred by late 2004; *Serambi Indonesia*, October 31, 2004).

Explaining GAM's Growth

It is not difficult to explain the rapid growth of GAM after 1998. The framework for an explanation has been provided by previous chapters and boils down to three key factors: political opportunity, ideological appeal, and organization. GAM grew because the opportunity generated by the collapse of the Soeharto regime created a vacuum into which it could step, its core ideas were already disseminated in rural Aceh, and it had a surviving network of activists who could rebuild the movement rapidly. The reactivation of both nationalist ideology and guerilla structure amid political breakdown explains GAM's resurrection. It is worth looking briefly at each aspect before observing growth patterns more closely.

The opportunity created by the fall of Soeharto was outlined in the previous chapter. The sudden loss of the state's authority, manifested in its inability to prevent exposure of past military cruelties or control civilian protest, as well as Habibie's promise of a referendum for East Timor, generated a euphoric mood of nationalist possibility. The threat of physical repression became less predictable and lessened overall, at least for a time. In 1998–1999, TNI commanders were ordered to adopt a new "persuasive" approach, and some feared punishment if they used brutal methods. The government's crisis provided GAM with new mechanisms for spreading its message. The media also became an avenue for propaganda. GAM field commanders fired a daily barrage of press statements and insisted that they be printed in the local press (and sometimes threatened journalists or destroyed newspaper delivery vans when they were not). Until the military emergency in May 2003, citizens could read long statements by GAM commanders in newspapers almost every day.

Second, GAM already had a coherent nationalist ideology, the broad outlines of which were already known in rural areas, and which seemed to be validated by events. During previous unrest, GAM's ideas had already been transmitted surreptitiously by word-of-mouth in rural districts. Hearing the same ideas espoused at public sermons, or seeing them printed in newspapers, must have been both astonishing and highly rousing for many people. Not much in GAM's message was innovative; most speeches and public statements repeated the old claims about the glories of Aceh's history, the artificiality of Indonesia, and the prosperity that awaited an independent Aceh. There was, however, more emphasis than before on state violence, and GAM spokespeople increasingly depicted their struggle as a defensive one to protect the population from the military. There was also a new urgency of tone. GAM leaders evinced great optimism. One widely used phrase was that independence was only a "cigarette away" (the time it would take to smoke one cigarette).

As a result of these two factors, it was now possible for GAM to engage in open and mass recruitment. Many GAM propagandists and fighters recall that after the sermons of the early post-Soeharto period, young men would come "in throngs" to join. In some places, hundreds took the oath on the spot. In many districts, training was also conducted openly, and ceremonies in open fields were attended by thousands of people when trainees were sworn in or graduated.

The third factor that explains GAM's rapid revival was organizational: the movement quickly reactivated its old network and cadres. Just as the discontinuity between the movement of the 1970s and that of the 1980s has previ-

ously been exaggerated, so too was the analytical confusion that accompanied the resumption of violence in late 1998 due partly to ignorance of the extent of GAM's preceding activity. As we have seen, military repression under DOM caused a lull in GAM activity, but it did not destroy it. Efforts to revive the movement had begun in the early 1990s and again in 1996. Public signs of a slow revival included a bank robbery in Lhokseumawe in February 1997, the army's capture of a cache of guns in the same month, and an ambush of a military convoy in April 1998. Part of the underground structure begun in the 1970s and periodically renewed since then had remained intact, and throughout the 1990s there were functioning command structures in Pase, Peureulak, Pidie, and Batee Iliek, although their members largely abstained from violence. Abdullah Syafi'ie, for example, never left Aceh.

More important, however, were the effects of GAM's Malaysian sanctuary and of the tightening conditions there beginning in about 1996. Malik Mahmud says he ordered "hundreds" of GAM activists to return to Aceh from Malaysia in 1997, when GAM leaders began to fear that the Malaysian and Indonesian governments were planning to act in concert against them. As Malik put it, he ordered them to "go back, establish, organize, and fight to the death. Prove to the world we mean business. . . . It's better for you to die in Aceh than in Malaysia" (interview with author, Stockholm, June 4, 2004). Others dispute the degree of coordination but agree that there was a major flow of fighters back to Aceh in 1997–1998, *prior* to the fall of Soeharto. The flow accelerated as the government weakened and then collapsed. Many GAM members and sympathizers returned to Aceh from Malaysia on their own initiative; some tell stories of buying pistols before leaving. These men, many of them recruited in Malaysia as workers or in immigration jails, formed an ideologically committed group of probably several hundred who then took the lead in rebuilding GAM's military organization, often as *panglima muda* or *panglima sagoe*. The Malaysian recruits were especially important in helping the movement spread to areas where it had previously been weak, especially on the west coast. The man in charge of coordinating GAM on the south and west coasts in late 1998 estimates that as many as two hundred recruits from Malaysia returned to South Aceh (Tapaktuan) around that time, although there was a far smaller number in West Aceh (Sayed Mustafa, interview with author, Jeuram, February 12, 2007).[3]

The Malaysian returnees' numbers were swelled when the Habibie government released many GAM members from prison as part of a broader amnesty of political prisoners. Some of these individuals (such as Ishak Daud) immediately assumed command positions in GAM's reconsolidating structure. The

transformation that had begun in the late 1980s was now complete. Aceh's war was not only being waged by young men; it was also being led by them.

Leadership and Recruitment

The new political conditions meant that GAM swelled rapidly beyond its initial core group. Unlike in the past, when potential members were contacted individually and secretly, in late 1998 there was a period of open and mass recruitment. What kind of people joined the movement? Early in the post-Soeharto period, when government officials tried to answer this question, they often identified several distinct groups. The first and smallest, they said, were the *ideological GAM*. By this they meant the leaders most committed to independence. The second group was the *vengeful GAM*, the children of victims of human rights abuses. The third group was opportunists and criminals drawn to GAM by the lure of loot, extortion, and brutality. As time passed and the military campaign resumed its old ferocity, security officials lapsed back into their old language and simply denigrated GAM as separatists, criminals, and degenerates. However, their original typology, although crude, contained some truth.

Certainly the villagers who joined GAM were more likely than students were to have personally experienced military violence. GAM members interviewed for this book often began their accounts of why they joined the movement with narratives of the horrors suffered either by them or by their close relatives; they then typically explained how such experiences illuminated the broader story of Aceh's victimization by Indonesia. Indonesian journalists who interviewed new GAM recruits after 1998 reported that some of them said they were motivated by feelings of "revenge" (*dendam*) for the torture, death, or rape of family members (see, for example, *Tempo*, January 27, 1999). Such feelings are not surprising; many studies of rural insurgencies find that individuals are often motivated by such experiences (see, for example, Wood 2003).

The actual mechanisms by which military violence swelled GAM ranks, however, were sometimes complex. As already noted in Chapter 4, GAM had earlier grown largely by way of kinship and friendship networks, a pattern that sometimes resulted in concentration of state violence against particular families. Thus, although some young men sought to avenge the deaths of people who had been ordinary villagers harmed by arbitrary DOM-era abuses, many of the past victims had suffered precisely because they had supported the insurgency. Those who survived viewed themselves not merely as avenging these people, but also as carrying on their earlier struggle. The talk of a new *generasi pendendam* (generation of the vengeful) thus partly continued the pattern by

which GAM had previously grown, along kinship networks in rural society, with military violence later burning its way along those same pathways. For many people, GAM thus represented a *hereditary struggle* as much as a novel response to recent state violence, a fact represented in how many supporters talked about the movement and Acehnese nationalism at its grassroots.[4] As we saw in the preceding chapter, military violence had the effect of expanding resistance to previously quiescent social groups in Aceh; it also hardened the resolve of individuals who were already integrated into the struggle by kinship and other networks.

Regarding the explanation that some GAM fighters were criminals hungering for loot, the picture here is complex. As previously acknowledged, among those most likely to join were young men already socialized in the use of violence. Such people included local *preman*—small-time gangsters, petty criminals, and thugs—as well as the porters (*harlan*) at markets or bus stations, whose job was to hustle passengers and cargo and whose work was sometimes legally dubious. Such people existed in every Indonesian province; during the Soeharto years they were often organized by military and police into state-sponsored "youth organizations." Once the Soeharto regime collapsed, the bonds keeping *preman* activity under the control of security officials weakened, and political party militias and ethnic and religious gangs proliferated everywhere, with many of them striving to influence politics (Wilson 2006).

In Aceh, GAM was the local manifestation of this new political gangsterism. GAM leaders acknowledge that there was little screening in the initial post-Soeharto recruitment: "Whoever was brave, even if he had a criminal background, we let them join; we needed people who were brave" (Sayed Mustafa, interview with author, Jeuram, February 12, 2007). As a result, many—perhaps a majority—of Aceh's *preman* joined GAM. (Others were recruited by the military as agents or, later, as militia members.) For example, GAM grew rapidly around North Aceh's Pusong area, a fish market with a reputation for toughness. In Bireuen, virtually all of the *harlan* and "terminal people," who operated in the bus station in town, joined GAM. These were not big-time criminals but men who were used to a tough life; many of them had frequently been on the receiving end of harassment by security forces. The most prominent of their number was Syamsul Bahri, alias Tgk Bahri, who became the *panglima muda* of Bireuen. His *panglima wilayah* was Tgk Darwis Djeunib, who by his own account had once worked as a small-scale *preman* in Medan, guarding a cinema as part of a gang, before leaving to work as a manual laborer in Malaysia, where he was recruited to GAM and sent to

Libya. Tgk Darwis agreed that "Lots of *preman*, lots of criminals and drunks joined GAM. . . . The good people didn't want to join GAM because they were too frightened" (interview with author, Jeunieb, November 16, 2007).

Indeed, the entry of such people into the insurgency does not necessarily mean that the movement was a criminal one. It is true that some individuals, such as, on the west coast, "Boy" and "Juragan," both of whom had been small-time gangsters according to local GAM fighters, continued to engage in extortion and theft and were punished by their commanders for these crimes (various ex-combatants and NGO activists, interviews with the author, Meulaboh and Jeuram, February 10–12, 2007). On the other hand, some informants told me that Tgk Bahri and his men were more respectful of local people than were the older generation of GAM fighters in Bireuen. In explaining such transformations, some former GAM fighters stress the religious education they received on joining the movement; some even describe their entry as a spiritual awakening, or as repentance for a misspent youth. The task of evaluating the movement's criminality is complex, and is attempted later in this chapter.

Many new recruits fell into none of these categories. Most were young men from the countryside who were enthused by the open propaganda and sense of promise that arose after the fall of Soeharto. Most of them had farming or petty-trading backgrounds, although some were unemployed or only semi-employed when they joined. Overall, however, most GAM fighters were typical of the village communities where they originated. One survey of former combatants conducted after the conflict showed that their educational levels were very similar to those of civilians (they were more likely to have completed some schooling but less likely to have completed higher education) and that almost 95 percent had been employed, mostly in agriculture and trade, before they joined the movement (World Bank 2006, 16). As in the past, kinship, village, and friendship networks still played a role in recruitment, but the rapid and public growth of GAM meant that many of the new members lacked previous ties to the movement.

Once they were inducted and trained, most GAM fighters continued to operate in their place of origin. When GAM was strong, they remained in their home villages and, if forced to leave, did not go far. Some fighters were sent to other regions to aid GAM expansion, and there were a few hundred mobile elite troops. Yet even at the height of the military emergency in 2003, many GAM fighters still managed to regularly visit their homes; according to the Aceh TNI chief, "The wives of GAM members keep getting pregnant and have lots of children" (*Analisa*, May 16, 2005).

Training of new recruits varied greatly, both over time and from place to place. Initially it was minimal; as time passed it became more systematic. At first, groups of recruits from the west, center, and south were sent to bases in North Aceh and in Pidie, on the east coast, for training; later training was conducted locally. Informants in various parts of Aceh say that around three months of training was standard, usually beginning with religious and ideological education for a month or so, then going on to military training, but also including matters such as humanitarian law. Often the trainers were Libyan graduates. Before they received such training, recruits often were gradually drawn into the movement by first being given relatively minor tasks, such as acting as lookouts or carrying a two-way radio set and using it to pass warnings and messages to fighters.

As in the past, a smattering of intellectuals, businesspeople, and others from the urban elite joined GAM. Thus, Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba, one of GAM's chief negotiators from 2000 was a lecturer at the Muhammadiyah University in Banda Aceh; another negotiator, Teuku Kamaruzzaman, had been the head of Pemuda Pancasila (a Golkar-affiliated youth organization that included many *preman*) in North Aceh and was a lawyer, a contractor, and the son of a former local bureaucrat and Golkar leader. Irwandi Yusuf, an important strategist and propagandist, was a veterinary science lecturer. However, there was no wholesale defection of urban groups to the insurgency. Such individuals were a minority in GAM and played advisory roles.

The young men who now led the movement, especially the former toughs from small-town Aceh and the Malaysian émigrés, imparted to the war a distinctive machismo. Many of the commanders, who had now become leading media personalities, cultivated a dashing personal style, wearing military fatigues mixed with civilian clothing. Sofyan Dawood, GAM's military spokesperson, for example, almost always appeared publicly wearing wraparound sunglasses. Some commanders adopted striking *noms de guerre*, such as "Jamaika," "Karibea," "Rambo," "Koffi Annan" (because of his dark skin), "Cage" (the bear, because of his strength), "si Koboi" (the cowboy), and "Saddam Hussein" (because his moustache was as thick as the Iraqi ruler's). According to one newspaper, when such men first appeared in Aceh, many of them brought with them AK-47 rifles with butts that could be folded back and hidden under a long jacket: "So the people in Lhokseumawe, although only in whispers, began to admire how these GAM guerillas looked. They were generally relatively young and almost all manly and well-built" (*Kompas*, July 27, 2001). As a result, the report went on, whoever wore a long jacket or even a denim jacket would face trouble from security forces; even those who wore

their shirts fashionably untucked would likely be searched, and not just because this was a way to conceal a weapon. Informants recall GAM fighters in Bireuen and Lhokseumawe neatly dressed in Adidas sneakers and Wrangler jeans, a style that many Acehnese associated with Malaysia. Soldiers sometimes shot people dressed in such outfits, without asking questions.

Local Dynamics of Insurgency

Because the backgrounds and proclivities of GAM's leaders and foot soldiers varied widely, so too did their relations with the communities where they operated. In some areas, GAM commanders were highly ideological, having received extensive training in Libya or Malaysia, and they tended to be disciplined. Ishak Daud and his men, for example, in Peureulak (East Aceh), had the reputation of being almost puritanically religious. In the recollection of one of Ishak's personal guards, he was "the ideal military commander"—"firm and authoritative," never allowing his fighters to grow their fingernails or hair long, and insisting that they perform the five daily prayers (Umar bin Rusli, interview with author, Langsa, November 14, 2007).[5] Some commanders were modest and reluctant to take action that would harm civilians; others were rash and hot-headed and put local communities at risk of military reprisals. In some places, relatively raw recruits with little training and criminal backgrounds became leaders and were relatively harsh toward local people. Most GAM fighters were bound by intimate social ties to the villages where they operated, and this constrained their behavior. A few operated in places where the movement had previously been weak and lacked local networks; here fighters could be more coercive.

Generally speaking, community support for the movement was greatest in the rural parts of the east coast where previous attempts at insurgency had been based. Numerous journalists' reports from 1999–2000 on these areas suggest an almost classical picture of a guerilla movement surviving because of intimate ties with villagers. In such areas it was not uncommon to meet people who insisted that GAM forces *never* abused locals. This picture of community support was confirmed by an Acehnese student activist who was not a member of GAM but spent almost a year hiding with GAM forces in mid-2003. He stayed mostly in rural Bireuen, although he also visited East and North Aceh. In these areas he observed that villagers judged GAM fighters on the basis of what they knew about them:

> GAM was not mysterious to local people. Instead they knew the GAM members well, in many cases since they had been children. They knew their personalities. So, for example, members of the community would sometimes not give monetary contribu-

> tions to the man assigned to collect finances in their district if they did not know him well or judged him to be of dubious character. Instead they would give their donations to some other individual whom they knew and whom they judged trustworthy and admirable. Indeed, I sometimes witnessed the local community exercising collective pressure on GAM, for example, boycotting them for a time in response to actions they had taken. For example, they would not give them food. They would not be punished for this. [Interview with author, Jakarta, February 5, 2005]

This activist explained that the locals in Djuli recalled that, in about 1999, residents of one village had an agreement with the *panglima sagoe* that he would not attack soldiers in their village. When he violated the deal and the TNI burnt their houses in response, the villagers held a demonstration outside his house (which had not been destroyed). Although the villagers knew they could criticize GAM fighters on such matters, they also knew that they "could not oppose them on matters of ideology, namely the question of independence." The only people who openly opposed GAM on the question of Aceh's independence in Bireuen were members of army-sponsored militias.[6]

In contrast, Schulze (2004, 17) argues that GAM tended to be more coercive and predatory in areas where it had not been strong prior to 1999. These were often also districts where the Acehnese ethnic group was not dominant (the central, southeast, and western regions in particular), and where GAM had little choice but to send in fighters from the east who lacked personal ties with villagers. Hence, in her analysis, some of the worst cases of GAM violence against civilians occurred in the districts of South Aceh, especially the Menggamat area, where in July 2001 violence occurred in response to local resistance to, and conflict within, GAM (Schulze 2005a: 41; see also *AcehKita*, August 21, 2003) and Central Aceh, where in mid-2001 major fighting broke out between GAM forces and army-sponsored militias, and serious abuses of civilians occurred on both sides. GAM had developed a significant presence in both areas after 1999.

It would be wrong to generalize from these instances. In many of the areas where GAM was newly established, especially in the west and south, popular support for the movement was strong, and it *was* established by local people, especially by individuals who had been recruited in Malaysia in the 1990s. But the overall point is a valid one: the movement could be more coercive toward civilians in areas where it had difficulty securing their voluntary cooperation. GAM found it particularly hard to strike roots in Central Aceh because many of the ethnic Javanese and Gayo people who lived there were suspicious of what they saw as the movement's ethnic exclusivism. As a result, there are more credible reports of GAM violence against ordinary villagers in this region than in most other regions. Violence in Menggamat was on a smaller

scale and harder to interpret, but it also seems partly to have been a result of fighters from other areas (in this case, other areas *within* the South Aceh district) moving to this isolated upland valley, making it their base, and intimidating locals, which led to resistance and reprisals.[7]

Instrumental and Expressive Violence

In analyzing GAM violence against its avowed enemies, it is worth thinking of a spectrum running between *instrumental* and *expressive* violence. In the language of security or defense studies, violence by guerilla or terrorist movements is generally considered to follow a strategic logic and to be consciously planned to achieve political or military goals. As many studies of ethnic conflict have demonstrated, violence can also provide emotional satisfaction to its perpetrators. As Christopher Coker (2005–2006, 156) puts it, "Instrumental violence is technical; whereas expressive violence is ritualistic, symbolic and communicative."

Most analysts have seen GAM violence as primarily following a strategic logic: aiming to achieve the goal of independence (Schulze 2004, 34–41; 2006, 226–236). There is no doubt that GAM commanders had a clear strategy in mind. Hasan di Tiro and some other leaders had studied the classics of guerilla warfare and were always ready to talk confidently about their goals and tactics. After 1998, the goals boiled down to two key objectives: making Aceh ungovernable and achieving international support. The first objective was relatively straightforward, and to achieve it GAM used the classic hit-and-run tactics of guerilla warfare. As we have seen, GAM forces succeeded in disabling the bureaucracy; they were also more effective than they had previously been in harassing government security forces. They still lacked the ability to engage in major set-piece battles or to take and hold territory for long periods. Instead, because they usually operated in groups of a handful of men, they generally melted away when government troops appeared. When asked to list their major military victories, the former GAM combatants I interviewed generally claimed spectacular attacks on military convoys in which two or three trucks might be destroyed and dozens of soldiers killed (the TNI never admitted such large losses), plus a few attacks on subdistrict capitals (notably, Idi Rayeuk, Idi Cut, and Simpang Ulim, all in East Aceh), which they managed to hold for a few hours at a time with a few dozen fighters. But even attacks on this scale were rare. Instead, the primary goal was, according to one commander in Pase (North Aceh), to "always attack the military posts in the villages":

> Most of our attacks were by at most five people. We never engaged in frontal warfare. We'd attack, then run. Our aim was to give the following message to the TNI: don't sleep, don't eat, don't bathe [we will always be there to attack you]. It was effective.

> They became afraid of their own shadows. . . . For a time there were no military posts in the interior of Pase. It was entirely empty. [Tgk Matang, interview with author, Lhokseumawe, February 19, 2007]

Despite the insurgents' initial effectiveness, within four years they were again greatly outgunned and driven into the rural hinterland; even in North Aceh, fighters were forced to take refuge in the mountainous interior.

The second strategic goal was to persuade the international community to intervene to end the war and support self-determination. This aspect of GAM thinking is explored thoroughly in Chapter 8. Suffice it to note here that GAM's violent actions were also often related to this goal. Some of the refugee crises that Aceh periodically experienced after 1999 were apparently engineered by GAM in order to turn international attention to the plight of Acehnese civilians. More generally, in order to interest international actors in conflict resolution, GAM needed to demonstrate that it could not be eliminated by force of arms.

We should not, however, divorce GAM's battlefield tactics from the nationalist ideological framework in which they were conceived. At the time it appeared to many outsiders that GAM was fighting a quixotic battle and was hopelessly outgunned. Some GAM leaders were realistic and viewed their military strength as a way to force Indonesia to negotiate; more were guided by a martial mind-set that valorized armed struggle and blood sacrifice. For instance, even when the movement was at a low military ebb, its de facto leader, Malik Mahmud, explained to me that "we cannot rule out military victory one day" (interview with author, Stockholm, June 11, 2004). The assessment that many GAM leaders, especially those in exile, made was informed by their belief that Indonesia was inherently nonsensical. GAM leaders paid scant attention to political developments elsewhere in Indonesia and believed that the country was on the verge of collapse. In interviews in Banda Aceh in March 2003, one of GAM's negotiators acknowledged that GAM could never secure a military victory over the TNI, but he was convinced that Indonesia sooner or later would disintegrate under its own weight. Some violent actions are explicable only if we take such beliefs into account; a September 2000 bombing of the Jakarta stock exchange, in which ten people perished, apparently occurred because GAM members believed such attacks would hasten Indonesia's collapse (though this was a murky and still poorly understood affair).

Some GAM encounters with government troops seemed intended to demonstrate bravery and fighting prowess to a local audience. Take, for instance, a challenge issued by Abu Arafah, the *panglima wilayah* of Meureuhom Daya, to a local military commander in late 1999. Angered by reports of military

depredations against civilians, Abu Arafah sent his counterpart a letter challenging him to bring his troops to the GAM base (to which he gave directions) within three days. Here, he said, they could fight it out: "In that place we'll have a trial of strength, so we can know who are cowards and who are men" (*Waspada*, December 6, 1999). Interviewed later, a local commander said that army troops often responded to such challenges: "We'd fly a flag and then take up positions waiting around it. They would usually come, and there'd be a fire fight and people would be killed" (Abu Tausi, interview with author, Calang, February 17, 2007). Indonesian military officers often also goaded rebel leaders by radio or through the press with accusations of cowardice. There were also many individual acts of vengeance and violence. In researching this book, I often heard stories of individuals or groups of young men who would obtain weapons on their own and then volunteer to join GAM, sometimes first attacking TNI posts to prove their bona fides. Especially early on there were also many reports of individual homicidal assaults on soldiers or policemen, often when they were off duty. Some Acehnese likened such attacks to the *Atjeh moorden* of the colonial period (*Kontras*, August 2-9, 2000).

If some violence expressed masculine bravado and personal vengeance, some also did the work of identity construction. We have already seen (in Chapter 3) that the Javanese were central to Acehnese nationalist ideology, in part because relabeling Indonesia as Java was a way to preclude overlap between Acehnese and Indonesian identity. Javanese residents thus came to symbolize not only alien overlordship but also a troublingly ambivalent and potentially polluting presence (see, for example, Linge 1993, 3–6). GAM (and many other Acehnese) also accused Javanese settlers of working for militias established by the army. This vision led, after 1998, to concerted attempts by the movement to purge the territory of Javanese, continuing earlier efforts begun in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s.

Attacks on transmigrant settlements typically followed a standard pattern. Armed men, sometimes wearing masks, would arrive at a settlement and tell the residents to leave. Sometimes villagers would find notices tacked on trees or doorposts. One shown to me by a group of displaced transmigrants in Medan in early 2001 read in part, "Oh Javanese transmigrants on the land of Aceh-Sumatra, now take to your heels, do not stay in Aceh Sumatra. Complain to your King who tortures you." There were also many reports of attacks on property, especially the burning of transmigrants' homes at night, as well as physical violence and murders. Sometimes, the violence was very brutal (although none of it has to date been thoroughly documented or investigated); transmigrant refugees I interviewed in Medan said they had witnessed beheadings.

GAM informants often said that Javanese who had ethnic Acehnese family members to act as guarantors would be allowed to stay; they also insisted that the Javanese were targeted not because of ethnic prejudice but because it was feared they would denounce fighters to the security forces.[8] Only those connected to local Acehnese communities by family networks were deemed trustworthy. In any case, the threats and attacks led to waves of mass flights by Javanese; by mid-2005 officials indicated that as many as 130,000 transmigrants had fled the province during the preceding seven years (*Analisa*, August 30, 2005).

The degree to which attacks on Javanese transmigrants were centrally directed by the GAM leadership is an open question. Anti-Javanese animus was by this time a widely shared attitude in Aceh and it is possible that the worst attacks were initiatives of local-level commanders and fighters. In the post-1998 period, GAM was reconfiguring its agenda in terms of human rights discourse, and the movement's more sophisticated leaders were aware that ethnic hostility could undermine its attempts to garner international support. Even so, GAM commanders publicly called for Javanese to leave Aceh. For instance, GAM spokesperson Sofyan Dawood responded to a TNI offensive by stating that all Javanese were used by the military as "spies and intelligence agents," so "we respectfully request our brothers from the Javanese ethnic group to immediately move" (*Waspada*, April 23, 2001; see also *Serambi Indonesia*, November 14, 1999).

Retributive Violence

What about violence against ethnically Acehnese civilians, whom GAM claimed to represent and lead? Again there is a dramatic divergence of views, with some accounts depicting the movement as surviving (at least in part) by terrorizing the population. A typical report is the following from the International Crisis Group (2001a, 11–12):

> GAM is ruthlessly single-minded in suppressing dissent. People suspected of collaboration with the Indonesian authorities have been killed, while NGOs or local politicians and religious figures who do not espouse GAM's message have been threatened and in some cases abducted. ICG has heard credible accounts of atrocities by members of GAM, including the murders of 19 people over a period of several months in 2000 and the recent killings of ten non-Acehnese residents of Central Aceh who were accused of collaborating with the security forces.

Others, however, claimed that GAM was a popular insurgency that would not have survived without great support, that accounts of abuses were exaggerated and that "what's striking is *how few* serious abuses GAM has actually committed" (Nessen 2005, 5, italics in original).

It is a mistake to view violence and popular support in zero-sum terms; GAM relied on both. Even active supporters knew that the movement would punish certain behavior, and the environment of threat and retribution from both sides meant that many citizens played a double game, so it became difficult to know where individuals' "true" loyalties lay.

One key to success for any guerilla movement is its ability to threaten and punish individuals who denounce it to the authorities or collaborate with them. As Fearon and Laitin (2003, 80; italics in original) put it, "the key to inducing the local population not to denounce the active rebels is *local knowledge*, or information about who is doing what at the village level. Local knowledge allows the active rebels to threaten retribution for denunciation credibly." Stathis Kalyvas (2006, 178) argues that information, and hence denunciation, is central to every civil war: "It is often overlooked that the sort of fear that is so pervasive in civil wars is not just generic fear of armed actors but often fear of being denounced by one's neighbours."

As we have seen, GAM was deeply embedded in village society. Its operatives knew which homes soldiers visited when they stopped in villages, to whom they spoke, and who gave them food. They kept an eye on who came and went at military bases. GAM also had a history of justifying violence against Acehnese who collaborated with their enemies. This tradition can be traced back to Darul Islam and, before it, to the Dutch war. In both periods the most bitter denunciations and brutal punishments were reserved for apostates and traitors who collaborated with the enemy. GAM was willing to punish, including by killing, Acehnese who informed on or betrayed the movement. As noted earlier, an early sign of the insurgency's revival in 1998 was a wave of killings of alleged *cuak*. This had also happened in 1989–1990.

The killings were admitted and justified by GAM. One author in the DOM period celebrated the fact that from 1989 to 1993, GAM strategy had

> silenced and defeated all the intelligence strategies used by Armed Forces. Every day they look, their spies are disappearing one by one, slaughtered by village people cooperating with Aceh Merdeka fighters. Hundreds of Javanese spies are dead, finished off in the land of Aceh, and thousands of the Special Forces troops of Indonesia-Java have met their ends in vain. [Luth Ari Linge 1993, 72]

Concerning the later round of killings of alleged *cuak*, a press release by Sofyan Dawood on December 23, 2004, boasted that "GAM once destroyed Indonesia's intelligence force in the 1998–2000 period, when almost all of the Indonesian Republic's intelligence personnel in Acheh were killed." In interviews too, former GAM fighters readily admitted to killing *cuak*.

In practice it could be difficult to determine precisely who was a *cuak*. In

addition to the relatively small group of paid military informers, many other civilians had friendly relations with government troops or complied with their directives out of fear. There is evidence that GAM sometimes took action against citizens who had only trivial or personal connections with the military (for example, there were occasional reports of combatants abducting women who had sexual relations with soldiers), but in the climate of denunciation and counterdenunciation, it was often difficult to understand precisely what was behind such stories. GAM fighters I have interviewed have insisted that they never took action for trivial reasons, and that media reports often masked more serious betrayal.

In statements from 1999, GAM spokespeople emphasized that they had a system for assessing the guilt of alleged collaborators and for meting out punishment. For instance, GAM negotiator Sofyan Ibrahim Tiba (*Kontras*, June 6–12, 2001) stressed that it was only "after [someone] is warned three times that we will carry out the law of war [that is, execute them]. But the accusation that GAM carries out lightning killings without procedure, that is completely false." In later interviews with former combatants, I routinely got the same story: punishments were not arbitrary but were carefully considered and always fit the "crime." Where conditions allowed it, local GAM commanders, police, or judges would capture the alleged *cuak*, call in witnesses, and pronounce sentence only if there was clear evidence. For minor infractions punishments might be detention in makeshift prisons in jungle camps. Usually, however, the offender would just be given "guidance." If a young person was involved, family members would be called and told to take responsibility for their child's actions (again demonstrating the centrality of family connections in the GAM worldview). Sometimes he or she would be sent to a *dayah* for a period of religious training and to remove them from military influence. GAM fighters also insisted that the seriousness of the crime was the key; executed were only those whose betrayals had caused the death of a GAM fighter, or something similarly serious. Nevertheless, the number of people executed as *cuak* was not insignificant, even by the admission of former members of GAM who were directly involved in these acts. One man from Peureulak said there were about fifty executions of *cuak* in the district between 1999 and 2005; another man, from Lhok Tapaktuan, in the south, put the number in his district over the same period at about seventeen (confidential interviews with author, Banda Aceh, August 2006; Kota Fajar, November 2007).

Among those killed in this way were surely at least some individuals who were denounced by their enemies for personal reasons or who were otherwise wrongly accused; for instance, GAM commanders often boast of killing

Javanese door-to-door peddlers and people "pretending" to be insane in both 1990 and 1998–1999, apparently harboring no doubt that they were intelligence agents. Moreover, the larger system of warnings and punishments must have been frightening for a much wider class of people. Former GAM fighters freely admit that they warned people who spoke ill of the movement; in the words of one former GAM policeman in Bireuen, "If people were saying bad things about GAM, we would talk to them and tell them to be careful that they don't end up becoming a *cuak*" (interview with author, Bireuen, June 18, 2006). In locations where everybody knew what happened to *cuak*, one can only imagine how terrifyingly effective such warnings must have been. Although it is true that many Acehnese civilians supported GAM, all of them knew that opposing the movement could have dire consequences.

Another large group of potential targets were Acehnese who worked for the state. As we saw in Chapter 3, from early on Hasan di Tiro and his followers had condemned Acehnese who worked for "Indonesia-Java" as traitors suffering "identity crisis." After 1998, GAM leaders sometimes made fearsome denunciations of Acehnese civil servants as "puppets" or "tools" of Jakarta. At one time, Abu Arafah sent an ultimatum to all Acehnese who worked for the "Indonesian bandit mercenaries" (the army), as well as all local legislators and civil servants, to immediately rejoin the "struggle to gain independence from the colonialists." Those who did not comply, he warned, would be shot (*Serambi Indonesia*, May 25, 2001). There are recorded instances in which GAM fighters acted on such promises and threatened, abducted, and (rarely) killed members of Aceh's elite. As we shall see, however, the dominant pattern was to exploit them.

Yet GAM did not work in a vacuum: government troops also worked with a retributive logic. Like GAM, TNI also depended on information from local civilians. From the DOM period onward, military officers always said that their success depended on the "bravery of the community in resisting GAM" (see, for example, *Serambi Indonesia*, June 28, 2003). In part they used allies who had reasons for personal enmity toward GAM. (Some leaders of pro-government militias established by the military after 2003 were businessmen who had formerly been abducted or harmed by GAM fighters.) Ultimately, however, the military knew that its success depended on ordinary community members reporting GAM fighters' whereabouts, refusing to supply them with food or money, and participating in militias to fight them.

Security forces used inducements, threats, and violence to end that support and to get the information they needed. Typically the retribution they meted out when they believed that their goals were being frustrated was far more brutal and indiscriminate than GAM's, precisely because they lacked local knowl-

edge. Instead they would do such things as move into a village and capture and torture civilians to force them to reveal what they knew about GAM, or shoot villagers or burn down their homes as collective punishment after GAM attacks. Although there was a large category of people whom GAM could potentially label as traitors, government troops viewed virtually the entire civilian population as potential collaborators with GAM. As one Indonesian journalist related:

> What often makes the soldiers angry is that when members of the community are asked about GAM, they always reply that they don't know: *hana tepu* [in Acehnese]. "That's all they can do," complains a soldier from the Marines' 6th Battalion from Cilandak; "It's as if they don't understand Indonesian." Local people only want to speak in Indonesian if they are treated violently. [*Sinar Harapan*, May 27, 2003]

To illustrate how the system of competing intimidation worked, and its effects, consider the fate of civil servants and politicians, whom GAM labeled as collaborators with an alien regime yet whose loyalties the military also often suspected. There was certainly much violence against this group. There were many media reports of local officials being kidnapped for ransom by GAM fighters, or killed by them. There were also many reports of government soldiers threatening or maltreating officials whom they suspected of harboring sympathies for GAM, being related to GAM members, or holding information about them. More common yet were reports of abductions or killings for which GAM and security forces blamed each other. The level of violence experienced by public officials, especially low-level ones, was great; by mid-2003 the provincial government was claiming that 118 village heads had been killed (*Kompas*, July 31, 2003).

In such circumstances it is difficult to make broad claims about where the loyalties of Acehnese officials lay. GAM supporters said that high participation in GAM-ordered strikes or in financial contributions at government offices was due to voluntary identification with the independence cause. Most Acehnese, they continued, even those who worked for the government, were really Acehnese nationalists "in their hearts." Military officers accused GAM of achieving these results by intimidation. Some NGO activists and outside observers argued that most civil servants (like much of the population) were terrorized by *both* sides and simply wished to be left alone. Sometimes, local officials echoed these claims. As Tengku Razali, a village head from the district of Bireuen, told a journalist from a national newspaper, "For *keuchik* in Aceh now it is exactly like living between the mouths of two rifles. One from the TNI/Polri [the military and police], one more from GAM" (*Kompas*, June 11, 2003).

Although the image of a hapless civilian population caught between two sides was attractive to outside observers, even here we cannot take such statements at face value; public claims about who was intimidating whom were often made for defensive reasons. I met a member of the provincial parliament in July 2001 who said that several *camat* in East Aceh had deserted their offices and moved to the district capital of Langsa not because they were afraid of being terrorized by GAM, although this was what was reported in the newspapers. In fact, they were more afraid of the military; if they managed to run their offices without GAM attacking or abducting them, the military would suspect them of being in cahoots with the movement.

Predatory Violence

In the 1970s, before GAM had much military capacity or geographic reach, it survived mostly on voluntary contributions from supporters. Sympathetic villagers and a few wealthy individuals provided accommodation, food, and other necessities. In the early 1990s, funds raised in the diaspora, especially in Malaysia, paid for the first modern weapons. After 1998 these sources of support remained important, but GAM's need for money and its capacity to raise it expanded greatly. With several thousand people to provide for within Aceh, international campaigning to fund, and especially weapons to buy, the movement's need for finances was very great. GAM became a massive income-generating machine.

GAM declared that as a legitimate government it had the right to levy on the population what it called "state taxes" (*pajak nanggroe*) and to compel those who did not wish to pay to do so. The collection of *pajak nanggroe* varied from region to region and over time, but it was elaborately organized. Local commanders appointed tax collectors, who carried official documents showing their bona fides, issued receipts, and kept lists of who had contributed.

GAM's taxation covered the entire spectrum of economic activity from petty informal trade through large-scale capital-intensive industry. For instance, *Serambi Indonesia* reported on June 29, 2003, the capture of a nineteen-year-old who worked as a tax collector in the subdistrict of Jeunieb in Bireuen. He collected very small amounts of money, between one thousand and five thousand rupiah, from small traders and stallholders. The big firms in Aceh (the cement and fertilizer factories) also made payments to GAM when the movement was strong, as did most of the companies that serviced the natural gas industry around Lhokseumawe. According to one unconfirmed report, the large Iskandar Muda Fertilizer factory reportedly paid ten billion rupiah (about US$1 million) to GAM in 2000 alone (Pane 2001, 114). GAM tried to extract payments from

ExxonMobil, apparently unsuccessfully. The movement also taxed trade, charging levies to allow the export of agricultural and forestry products—everything from coffee to bird's nests, timber to palm oil—from areas where such trade was strong. Fishermen too, in some areas, paid contributions, and there was a host of opportunistic fundraising, with fees levied on everything from the import of used cars from Singapore via Sabang to inheritances (*Kompas*, May 17, 2003). Former GAM fighters freely admit that they got money from all manner of sources, although they generally deny that they used threats or intimidation to do so. Thus, in South Aceh fighters received 15 percent of the income generated by harvesting birds' nests in forest caves, as well as large donations (up to 100 or 150 million rupiah [US$10–15,000]) from operators of sawmills, and gifts in money and kind from ordinary people (Tgk Amran, interview with author, Kota Fajar, November 11, 2007).

It is difficult to square the Aceh case with those analyses that stress the determining role of large-scale economic resources in funding rebellion. GAM did extract money from businesses clustered around the gas industry, but it profited from *every* sort of economic activity in the province. There was nothing especially unique about the economic feasibility of rebellion in Aceh; GAM raised money from the sort of activities that existed in every Indonesian province.

Indeed, a key source of funding for the rebels was their chief opponent: the Indonesian state. GAM drew much of its money from the state and from the patrimonial business networks that surrounded and penetrated it. It levied taxes on public servants; at one point the army claimed that in the six hundred villages in North Aceh up to 50 percent of the wages of village officials—more than 250 million rupiah (US$25,000) per month—were being siphoned off to pay GAM (*Waspada*, June 26, 2002). We shall also see that GAM extorted payments from local officials and politicians, and even more important, drew indirectly on the state budget by levying fees on government contracts to build infrastructure. Police and military spokespersons frequently said that this was a major problem. In late 2002, for instance, the Aceh chief of police said that some contractors were providing 10 percent of project funds to GAM (*Media Indonesia*, December 2, 2002). A report in *Kompas* a year later quoted an anonymous construction contractor who gave the same figure and said that "the GAM tax collectors are quite smart and they don't want to be lied to. The calculation of project tax has to fit the value of the contract. If the contract is worth one billion rupiah, then you've got to give GAM 100 million" (*Kompas*, May 17, 2003). Indeed, at one point during the military emergency, the TNI announced it was stopping *all* construction projects in Bireuen in order to halt the flow of money to GAM; projects would be allowed to

proceed only if special permission was granted by the military (presumably also allowing them to take a cut themselves).[9]

Much GAM violence against civilians was associated with fundraising of this sort. This does not mean that many people did not contribute voluntarily (many surely did) or that all GAM members were routinely explicitly threatening in their fundraising. Former fighters I have interviewed almost always insist, perhaps not surprisingly, that they did not make their requests for money with threats. Yet when they explain what they *did* do, it is impossible to miss the implicit threat of violence. Hence, former GAM commanders often recall how they would summon local businesspeople to their bases to explain to them that they should "voluntarily" contribute to the struggle. Sometimes the threat was made clearer; as one GAM leader from the west coast put it to me, "We would look for rich people, entrepreneurs. We'd offer them a choice: help us in a material way, or come and wage war alongside us. Most would choose to donate materially" (confidential interview, Calang, February 17, 2007). And despite all the denials, there is plenty of evidence that even more explicit threats were made and sometimes acted on, including destruction of businesses, abduction, and even murder. An example was the murder of Dayan Dawood, the respected rector of Aceh's main state university, Syiah Kuala, in September 2001. Dawood, a critic of the central government, was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle passing his car. This slaying was one of a string of unexplained murders of prominent Acehnese; some were evidently committed by security forces. Eventually, the police arrested some of the culprits in Dawood's murder; one man, Mahyuddin, was also known as Raja Preman (King of the gangsters) and, as his alias suggested, was affiliated with Aceh's underworld, but he also had links with GAM and (so prosecutors alleged) had been ordered to carry out the killing by GAM leader Ayah Sofyan. It seems the rector was shot because he had refused to contribute a cut from a university construction project.

Another characteristic form of GAM violence against entrepreneurs and officials, which became more common after 2003, was kidnapping for ransom. The typical pattern was that gunmen would take away a businessman and detain him in a remote camp until his family paid for his release. There were many reports of such kidnappings in the Indonesian press after the military emergency began in May 2003; within six months TNI was claiming that 157 people were being held as GAM prisoners (*Analisa*, November 6, 2003). At first sight it seems strange that this apparently audacious and highly organized form of violence took place at precisely the moment the military balance was tipping back in favor of government troops. It makes sense because there was often a

retributive element in such cases. GAM informants say they "detained" individuals who had crossed the movement in some way, such as by going back on a promise to make a payment, by trying to cut them out of a deal, or by betraying them to the authorities (for example, by arranging to have police waiting when a GAM tax collector was due to turn up). It was precisely when government forces were gaining an advantage that such behavior proliferated; indeed, some businesspeople and officials who had previously been deeply involved in GAM followed the logic of defection to its end and went on to lead military-sponsored antigovernment militias.

One of the most famous of these individuals was Sofyan Ali, a wealthy contractor and member of the local parliament in Bireuen, who became involved in GAM's civilian army around 1999. By his own account he became disillusioned with the movement, defected, and provided the authorities with information about GAM in 2003. GAM people give different versions. Some say he defected only after he was arrested and interrogated; others say the trigger was his refusal to provide GAM with a cut of a contract to build a road. He was later beaten by GAM fighters, prompting him to lead the local anti-GAM "front." A similar person was Misriadi (or Adijan), a wealthy Gayo coffee merchant who became famous in 2003 as the leader of an anti-GAM militia that attacked international peace monitors in Central Aceh. Some media reported that he became an anti-GAM militant because he was kidnapped by GAM fighters and released only after his family paid a five hundred million rupiah (US$50,000) ransom. Former GAM members say he had been deeply involved in the movement in the post-Soeharto years, acting as an intermediary between them and government officials, and had gained lucrative contracts from his GAM connections. When GAM fighters detained him it was to ensure that he paid debts of 750 million rupiah. After he was released he defected to the government and established his militia (Fauzan Azima, interview with author, Bener Meriah, August 20, 2006).

All of this means that it is too simple to say that the movement was merely "criminalized." Terms like *greed* and *predation* do not fully capture the nature of GAM fundraising. There is little evidence that such activities often translated into significant accumulation of private wealth by GAM commanders (in contrast to corrupt officials and military officers, who often became wealthy). There were constant rumors in GAM of this or that commander who took money to purchase arms but failed to deliver. A few GAM leaders *did* abscond with money, but they often ended up on GAM's wanted list. No doubt too in some places GAM fighters were little more than bandits operating in small groups beyond the control of the command structure; and of

course some individuals who were only loosely connected to the movement, or not at all, would claim to be from GAM in order to engage in opportunistic extortion.

Many more people in the movement were puritanical on these matters; they might think nothing of commandeering a car from passing townspeople on a main road, but they would not tolerate petty theft from local villagers. GAM leaders themselves periodically promised to regulate their collection of taxes, and even warned the population that many of the people claiming to be collecting money for the movement were "false GAM" (see, for example, *Analisa*, March 22, 2003). There is evidence that some GAM leaders imposed strict discipline on their fighters and even punished individuals for relatively minor infractions such as carrying guns in the community without permission—let alone those who actively harmed civilians or tried to extort money from them. Many GAM commanders have told me that the most common and effective punishment for the former was to confiscate the fighter's gun, confine him to "barracks," and ban him from armed actions. Other commanders had more direct methods. Darwis Djeunib in Batee Iliek, who had a *preman* past himself, says he controlled his fighters by challenging them to fight: "I would tell them, 'If you want to make trouble, make trouble with me.' It was effective" (interview with author, Jeunieb, November 16, 2007). Some commanders even published their telephone numbers in newspapers and told the public to report cases of robbery or extortion. In the words of one commander, "This was a very effective way to control our people at the lower levels" (Fauzan Azima, interview with author, Bener Meriah, August 20, 2006), which confirmed that predatory behavior *was* a problem for the movement.

It is also important to emphasize the class dimension of GAM's economic activities. Many ordinary villagers willingly sheltered insurgents and provided them with food. The insurgency was far more predatory toward wealthy individuals. Indeed, for many businesspeople and officials, GAM was little more than a protection outfit, extorting money in exchange for security. Despite GAM's incendiary language about "traitors" who worked for or with the state, much of the state apparatus and the economy were able to function, provided that those in control paid up. In effect, the movement became parasitical on Aceh's business elite and bureaucracy.

However, just as it is important not to separate GAM's retributive violence from that of the military, it is also important not to see GAM's fundraising in isolation from the broader political economy. GAM behavior was only one part of a system organized on a predatory and patrimonial basis (Brown 1994, McGibbon 2006). During the Soeharto period, local officials in Aceh, as in

other parts of the country, were part of a pyramidal structure through which patronage flowed and in which it was expected they would use their office for personal enrichment. Local businesspeople who prospered in this system were mostly those with favored access to contracts and licenses issued by the officials they cultivated (see McCarthy 2006 for a study of how this system worked in Aceh's timber industry). This culture of corruption did not disappear after the fall of Soeharto. Rather, it was strengthened both by autonomy arrangements, which increased the funds available to local officials, and by the conflict, which weakened supervisory mechanisms and provided cover for profiteering. Local government offices in Aceh became full of fixers and middlemen of all types, who lobbied for projects and promised kickbacks. Some officials invented novel ideas for enriching themselves. One technique was allocating funds for "fictive" projects in violence-affected regions; because progress could not be checked, it was relatively easy to pocket the funds. When GAM emerged as a new force in 1999, it simply became an additional player in this system. Local politicians and the entrepreneurs connected to them were already well schooled in the art of the deal, and they knew that if they wanted their business activities to prosper, they would have to make arrangements with GAM fighters, even if they often continued to pay off the military and police at the same time.

The TNI was a central player in Aceh's shadow economy. Soldiers and police extracted money from the local population in many ways. Theft from homes when troops conducted raids was common, but even more widespread was extortion at checkpoints; it became so intense on the Medan-Banda Aceh highway that truck drivers several times went on strike or demanded military convoys to guarantee free passage (see, for example, *Kompas*, May 9, 2001; *Serambi Indonesia*, February 20, 2002). Other military income-generating activities included involvement in both legal businesses (such as forestry or palm oil) and illegal activity (smuggling, illegal timber, marijuana, and so on) and the extraction of substantial sums for "security" services from the major enterprises in the province (McCulloch 2005b). In effect they ran protection rackets that resembled (and usually preceded) those run by GAM. So pervasive were these activities that many intellectuals, NGO activists, and others argued that the profit motive drove military violence because disorder provided more fundraising possibilities. According to this perspective, the Aceh conflict was a *proyek*, allowing individual officers and the military as an institution to extract substantial revenues—revenues crucial for the continued viability of the institution when (as is often estimated) only approximately 30 percent of military funding was derived from budgetary sources.

Not surprisingly, a characteristic complaint of wealthy Acehnese was that they faced extortion from both sides. In 2001 I met the manager of a gas station on the main road between Banda Aceh and Medan. He said he regularly faced demands for money from both GAM and the military. GAM fighters (some of whom he had known since childhood) would sometimes come to his house at night demanding large sums, often amounts he could not possibly afford. He would try to reason with them but it was frightening. With the military, the payments were regular but small, and he generally allowed military vehicles to fill their tanks free of charge. Overall, the military was taking more from him than GAM was, but in a more predictable and regular fashion. This pattern was replicated in many settings; in effect there was a contest between GAM and government forces over who would extract money from which source, but it was a competition in which the opponents sometimes cooperated.

Ambiguous Alliances and the Shadow Economy

A standard view of insurgency is of a zero-sum struggle in which rebels confront and try to defeat the state. This was how the belligerents in Aceh portrayed the war: GAM fighters said they wanted to free Aceh, their opponents said they wanted to save Indonesia. The war can be understood in this way, but this was only one dimension of it. The preceding discussion hints that there were also hidden, ambiguous, and furtive ties between actors on both sides. Even as on the surface the insurgency and the state tried to defeat each other, below the surface they shared many links. Just as the conflict destroyed the livelihoods of thousands of ordinary citizens in the formal economy, it generated a shadow economy in which others could enrich themselves. In the shadows, a diverse range of brokers, gangsters, businesspeople, soldiers, police, officials, and rebels fought over turf and competed for resources, often killing each other in the process. But they also sometimes divided territory, struck deals, and cooperated.

There was huge trade in contraband, such as illegal timber, guns, and marijuana. Armed men on both sides could make money by offering protection to—that is, extorting money from—actors in the formal economy. There was also scope for opportunists who pretended to be affiliated with either side to extort money. As well as the "false GAM," who demanded money from people, there were confidence tricksters who impersonated military or police officers and tried to squeeze nervous officials. Finally, there were opportunities for businesspeople who were nimble enough to pay off both sides and get access to plantations and other resources that were lying fallow in the conflict

zone. This shadow economy, and the indirect and sometimes direct ties it entailed between insurgents and officials, was not incidental to the insurgency. It also determined its shape in fundamental ways.

Consider the following incident. In April 2002, the Medan newspaper *Waspada* carried several brief but curious reports about the highland district of Central Aceh (or Linge, as GAM called it). The first article, published on April 3, included a press release from the local GAM command:

> We warn the squabbling elite of Central Aceh, especially the *bupati* Mustafa M Tamy and the Deputy-Speaker of the DPRD [local parliament] Tagore, not to make use of the name of GAM or exploit GAM members from the territory of Linge in their attempts to seize power and personal popularity.

Spokesperson Fauzan Azima explained that GAM's network had recently been "frequently contacted by people close to Mustafa M Tamy" who were asking them to assassinate Tagore for payment. Tagore's men had also made similar approaches, asking GAM members to kill Mustafa. A former GAM spokesperson for the territory, Marzuki, alias Win Rimba Raya, had been "trapped by this scheme" and GAM members suspected him of having received 50 million rupiah (US$5,000) to kill Tagore. "Not wishing to be left behind," Tagore had paid 10 million rupiah to Tamlikha [a later edition of the newspaper gave his name as Timika], alias Saddam Perot, a former member of GAM, to kill Mustafa. Fauzan said, "Praise be to God. To the present time, there has not yet been any interelite killing using the hand of GAM. If that was to happen, it would stain our holy struggle." Marzuki and Tamlikha, he added, had been placed on GAM's wanted list, because they had used the GAM struggle to enrich themselves (*Waspada*, April 3, 2002).

On April 8, *Waspada* reported on a public breakfast meeting at the office of the *bupati*. Before an audience of local assembly members and civil servants, Mustafa and Tagore emotionally denied they had approached GAM. In response, the next day Fauzan Azima released further details. He admitted that Tagore had not "directly attacked the *bupati*," but had attacked only Mustafa's "trusted people," such as Zainal Wahab (alias Zakir), a consultant and contractor, and Said Muslim, a relative of the *bupati*'s wife and a broker for divvying up projects from the Department of Public Works. Fauzan claimed, however, that the *bupati* had indeed invited the Linge GAM commander, Tgk Ilham Ilyas Leube, to his official residence using "a businessman" as an intermediary and had "talked all about Tagore." GAM had then held a meeting and concluded that they would "reject all attempts to damage the image of GAM, including by refusing to support Mustafa M Tamy" (*Waspada*, April 9, 2002).

This incident (the basic outlines of which have been confirmed to me by Fauzan Azima and other former GAM fighters from the territory but not by the officials concerned, with the result that many doubts must remain about precisely what happened) came against the backdrop of close connections with the local ruling elite and an internal GAM fight over the misuse of funds. The highlands are very rich, with their coffee plantations, timber, and other agricultural products. When GAM established itself there around 2000, it grew rapidly. Local commanders estimated that they initially controlled 80 percent of the area and, unlike on the coast, could take and hold territory, including small towns. In these circumstances, "financial assistance flowed to us from the *bupati*, from the officials, from businesspeople, as well as from ordinary citizens" (Fauzan Azima, interview with author, Bener Meriah, August 20, 2006). GAM taxed goods being transported out of the territory at a rate of 50 rupiah per kilogram for coffee. One former local GAM commander estimated that this produced an income of at least 15 million rupiah (US$1,500) per day. Local government officials, including the *bupati*, not only paid GAM a percentage of the value of government projects, but they also *awarded* such projects to GAM commanders or GAM-connected businesspeople, with the understanding that GAM would take 15 percent. Fauzan himself got a road-building project valued at 7.5 billion rupiah (US$750,000) (interview with author, August 20, 2006).

In this environment, in the words of Fauzan Azima, some of GAM's leaders developed a "corrupt mentality" and took for themselves money that had been collected to buy weapons. Fauzan and his supporters accused a rival group of local GAM leaders of misusing funds (explaining why they later leaked the story of the assassination plots to the press), with a total of at least one billion rupiah (US$100,000) going missing. In particular, Win Rimba Raya, former GAM spokesperson for Linge and, before that, a civil servant, was accused of fleeing the highlands with a large bag that was believed to contain cash; he left Aceh altogether and went to Jambi in south Sumatra, where he cut his ties with the movement but was later arrested.[10] The result was that one of the richest GAM commands in Aceh was very poorly armed. As Fauzan Azima bitterly recalled:

> By the time the fighting became intense, all the corrupt leaders had fled. This is why we *hate* corruption so much. So many of our comrades were martyred, and our organization destroyed, because of corruption. [Interview with author, Bener Meriah, August 20, 2006]

Doubts remain about exactly what happened in this series of related incidents in Central Aceh (especially in the alleged assassination plots), but I have ex-

plained them at such length because they are relatively well-documented examples of a pattern of widespread shadowy relations between GAM fighters and state officials. Because of the secretiveness of these relations, it is very difficult to discover their precise nature, and accusations and counteraccusations typically swirl around each instance. However, although it seems that the ties between GAM fighters and government officials were especially intense in Central Aceh, perhaps because of the physical isolation of this region, they were far from a unique example.

During the early post-Soeharto years, GAM fighters everywhere struck deals with local officials. This became public knowledge after the military emergency in May 2003, when the authorities announced investigations into even high-ranking officials, including several *bupati*. DPRD members were detained or questioned. One Golkar member of the DPRD in Aceh Besar was tried for treason after it was alleged he had regularly donated money to local GAM leaders and attended ceremonies in the hills (*Serambi Indonesia*, November 14, 2003, and December 18, 2003). Eventually the armed forces chief announced that the governor, Abdullah Puteh, had met with GAM leaders in a fancy Jakarta restaurant when he was campaigning for the governorship and given them money in the hope of securing their support, and had later met with Malik Mahmud, then GAM's minister of state, at a seafood restaurant in Singapore for the same purpose (*Media Indonesia*, September 5, 2004; *Serambi Indonesia*, September 9, 2004). One intermediary in this deal, the important GAM figure on the west coast, Sayed Mustafa, confirmed that Puteh had promised to give money from the provincial budget to the movement if he was elected. Although Sayed says he did not personally organize pressure on DPRD members to vote for Puteh, he could not rule out that there was "intimidation via telephone calls" in other regions, or that GAM fighters in other areas may have done the same for rival candidates (interview with author, Jeuram, February 12, 2007).

Links to district government could be more intimate. In South Aceh (part of the area under Sayed Mustafa's control), in 1999 local GAM leader Khartiwi Daud was ordered to "develop links with the government, including the *camat*, the *bupati*, and members of the DPRD." He often met senior officials in the main government offices in Tapaktuan, where he gave them "Aceh education" and explained to them why it was legitimate for the Acehnese to rebel. They would give him money or make deposits in bank accounts held by GAM leaders. One senior official gave a *kijang* van (Khartiwi Daud, interview with author, Banda Aceh, November 6, 2007). In Bireuen, on the east coast, before the election (by the local legislature) of the *bupati* in 2002, the ultimately

successful candidate Mustafa Geulanggang approached the local GAM commander, Tgk Darwis Djeunib, for support: "I had heard he was a bit better than the other candidates; he had connections with some GAM people and he came and met me, asked my permission to put himself forward as a candidate. I gave it. He probably told the legislators that." Darwis remained in telephone contact with Mustafa through the conflict years, and he did not mind when the *bupati* made hostile comments about GAM after the TNI came to Aceh in great numbers: "We understood that. He worked for the government. He couldn't flee." Darwis says he did not get much money from these contacts with the *bupati*, but he did receive a satellite telephone from governor Abdullah Puteh: "I didn't support him to become governor, nor did I ask for it. It just turned up one day. A gift. I needed it, so I sent him my greetings in return" (interview with author, Jeunieb, November 16, 2007).

Direct contact between the fighting forces on both sides was also common. GAM fighters in the field invariably maintained communication with government troops via radio, by mobile telephone, or through intermediaries. Fighters on opposite sides whiled away their days exchanging idle abuse or challenging one another to fight, but such interactions could also be used for mutual benefit. The obvious example concerns the trade in arms and ammunition. A major source of GAM's weapons was the black market in Southeast Asia, with Thailand being the main source of rifles, especially AK-47s, which made up the majority of the movement's weapons. Prominent GAM strategist (and later governor of the province) Irwandi Yusuf estimated that about 80 percent of the movement's weapons were purchased there (interview with author, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006). GAM fighters later regretted the early decision to arm themselves mostly with "AKs," because the Indonesian army relied on M16s so that fighters could not easily restock with ammunition bought or captured on the battlefield.

Arms and ammunition were also sourced domestically. Some were bought on the black market in Jakarta and other towns, via intermediaries who would approach corrupt military officers and officials from armaments factories. Occasionally authorities announced the discovery of caches of weapons or ammunition being shipped from Jakarta to Aceh.[11] According to Irwandi Yusuf, about 20 percent of GAM's weapons, and a larger amount of ammunition, were purchased in Indonesia. In fact, there seemed to be variation among the territorial GAM commands on this matter, as well as a high degree of autonomy in their weapons buying. Informants on the west and south coasts suggest that their sources, especially at first, were mostly in Jakarta; Darwis Djeunib in Bireuen says that about half of those bought in that district were

sourced across the straits, and half came from Jakarta (interview with author, Jeunieb, November 16, 2007). Purchases were also made in Aceh. As one senior GAM leader put it:

> We didn't get many weapons from TNI in Aceh, but many bullets. We'd make deals: for instance, the two sides would say we were having an armed clash, and both would shoot into the air, ha ha. Once the TNI withdrew, they'd leave their bullets behind at a spot we'd agreed before. It was usually the TNI who were about to go home who would do this. But it wasn't a real lot. [Interview with author, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006]

I heard many stories of this sort from GAM fighters in every region of Aceh. Often the pay-off was not pecuniary. For example, a *sagoe* commander in Bireuen recalled that soldiers sometimes deliberately left weapons where they had been on operations, sometimes along with boots, bullets, shirts, and the like. Their reward was generally a promise by GAM not to attack. This was especially the case with "organic troops," who lived permanently in town. If certain units or officers did not mistreat the community and did not report GAM's presence to their superiors, GAM troops could agree not to attack them. In fact, such people had good relations with GAM people. One such officer had his motorcycle stolen; GAM "boys" found it and returned it to him. At other times, army troops would radio their GAM adversaries when they were going on patrol so as to avoid battle. On the other hand, when a squabble occurred in Bireuen between Kopassus (army special forces) and Brimob (police mobile brigade) over which unit had the right to extract levies from local businesspeople, the Kopassus troops sometimes gave advance warning to GAM about Brimob movements, with the understanding that they *would* attack them. It was only under military emergency that there was "real" war in Bireuen (Abu Karim, interview with author, Bireuen, August 19, 2006).

Similarly, Sayed Mustafa, on the west coast, said there was "no real war in Aceh," at least until the military emergency in 2003. He added that through the conflict years no organic military troops in the district of Nagan Raya on the west coast were killed—at least none who had lived in the district a long time. When armed exchanges occurred between the two sides, it was mostly accidental, because they had stumbled across one another. To avoid this, government troops often radioed ahead to tell GAM to move aside (interview with author, Jeuram, February 12, 2007). In South Aceh, some soldiers delivered bullets, magazines, and military clothing to GAM camps during the military emergency in May 2003, with the payoff being an agreement that GAM would not attack (Khartiwi Daud, interview with author, Banda Aceh, November 6, 2007; Tgk Amran, interview with author,

Kota Fajar, November 11, 2007). Tengku Muharram, the deputy GAM commander in Aceh Besar (or Aceh Rayeuk, as GAM called it), the district surrounding the capital, said that in his district not only did they buy weapons from the military during the conflict years, but he even spent much of the military emergency living downstairs in the house of a military officer: "If a TNI person didn't upset the people, why would we harm him? If he was good, we would be friends with him. Some would give us weapons, give us protection. Why would we kill him? Our war was not brutal" (interview with author, Banda Aceh, February 22, 2007). Even in Pase, where the fighting was fierce, plenty of soldiers wanted to avoid conflict. They also needed money, in the view of one local GAM leader, so "they would sell whatever they could. If they had a magazine, they'd sell that one day; if they had a grenade, they'd sell that the next day." The attitudes of the TNI troops, he recalled, were about "fifty-fifty": some soldiers were tough and wanted to fight; others would look for compromise. "GAM's position was like that of a rich man. If they wanted to 'sell' [that is, attack] we were happy to take them on; but if they wanted to compromise, we'd go along" (Tgk Matang, interview with author, Lhokseumawe, February 19, 2007).

There were many rumors of business arrangements made directly between GAM commanders and senior military officers, but these were secretive and I could not confirm details. The more common pattern was a de facto division of territory (*lahan*) between the military and GAM, with both sides profiting from the same economic activity and dealing with each other through intermediaries. Lesley McCulloch has noted that GAM raised funds in East Aceh by working abandoned palm oil plantations along with local people. She interviewed the main commander in the district, Ishak Daud, shortly before his death. He told her:

> We need money, so we have to do whatever we can to make that. Yes, we are in the business of plantations. Sometimes we even have to work there, look the other way while the trucks transport the harvest, often with a military "escort." Cooperation with the police (and sometimes even the military) is the price we pay for being in the war. [cited in Eye on Aceh 2007, 8]

Rather than a constant and bitter fight to the death, the picture that emerges of the years between 1999 and 2003 is of a typical low-intensity conflict. There was terrible violence, much of it directed against civilians, but there were also plenty of compromise, deal making, and accommodation. Both sides contained many individuals who wanted to avoid fighting to the death and who sought instead to profit from the conflict. GAM survived and prospered in this shadowy war economy.

Conclusion: Criminal Gang or Noble Rebels?

GAM's insurgency should not be easily categorized as either an ideological rebellion or a criminalized one. Instead, it was a mixture of both, as are most civil wars. As Kalyvas (2003, 475) puts it, "Civil wars are not binary conflicts but complex and ambiguous processes that foster an apparently massive, though variable, mix of identities and actions—to such a degree as to be defined by that mix."

The insurgency had brutal and predatory aspects. GAM fighters were violent, often arbitrarily so, toward some civilians. They used fundraising methods that, to many of those asked to pay, were extortionate. To access money and weapons, they used connections to a criminal underworld. Sociologically, the leading figure of the insurgency was the "political bandit" one finds in many contemporary civil conflicts (for example, on Algeria, see Martinez 1998, 10–14). The foot soldiers were mostly ordinary young men from the villages, though some were the unemployed or underemployed youths that many studies blame for much of the brutality of civil wars (for example, Fearon and Laitin 2000, 856).

Yet GAM was also a movement with a powerful sense of ideological mission and relatively strong central organization. In writing about the leftist rural insurgency in El Salvador, Elisabeth Wood (2003, 235) stresses the largely voluntary participation by *campesinos* in the struggle, and the sense of value they obtained from supporting it. In one of its guises, GAM was a movement of this sort. My own interviews with former combatants suggest that fighters were committed nationalists who saw themselves as sacrificing themselves to tough discipline to further their cause.

There were also patterns in GAM violence toward noncombatants. In conclusion, it is worth stressing two of these. First, and most simply, the social distance that separated fighters from potential victims was important. Apart from individuals who actively collaborated with the military, GAM was most coercive toward Javanese settlers, targeting them for ideological reasons and because they saw them as lacking the familial and other connections to embed them in rural society and make them trustworthy. Javanese migrants justifiably saw GAM forces as ethnic cleansers. Rich and urban folk, or many of them, saw the movement as predatory because they were a chief source of funds for it. By contrast, villagers often knew fighters intimately, whether as friends, relatives, or former classmates. A virtuous cycle occurred in such circumstances: fighters' close ties with locals exercised a disciplining effect on them, and the relatively warm support they received made coercion less necessary. However, even in rural areas, GAM members viewed some activities as beyond the

pale. They punished villagers who cooperated with soldiers, and brooked no criticism of their larger goals. Nevertheless, for most rural areas the image of a popular insurgency deeply embedded in local communities does hold true, just as an image of frightening brigands was equally true for many townsfolk, officials, and Javanese.

Second, there was also variation over time. However, the trend appears to be one not of increasing criminalization but in the opposite direction. After about 2001, as the movement's fortunes declined, criminal and opportunist elements tended to desert. This makes sense if we consider the calculus of risks and opportunities that individuals—especially those interested in personal benefit—made when deciding to affiliate with GAM. During the nationalist euphoria of 1999–2000, with GAM suddenly ascendant, the movement attracted all kinds of persons, including many who sought private advantage. Former GAM leaders admit that they were not sufficiently selective in recruiting, training, and monitoring recruits. Some GAM leaders tried to control this tendency by organizational restructuring and greater discipline. Much depended on local commanders. More important were the increasing risks associated with GAM affiliation. As the government's military campaign intensified around 2001, many individuals whose motivations had been opportunistic began to defect. Thus we see as early as 2001 both corrupt GAM leaders and businesspeople who had previously profited from an association with GAM either absconding or seeking military protection. Another rash of defections occurred in 2003, when the military emergency began. As the balance of retributive violence swung decisively in favor of the military, more businesspeople, officials, and even some members broke from GAM, prompting the movement to retaliate against defectors.

7

Islam to Nationalism
The Logic of Identity Differentiation

> GAM did not fight for religion, because the Acehnese were already religious.
>
> *Abu Tausi, former GAM spokesperson for the territory of Meurehom Daya (interview with author, February 13, 2007)*

We are now able to return to a key theme of this book: the relationship between Islam and nationalism in the Aceh conflict. By the late 1990s, political Islam was on the march in many parts of the world. Over preceding decades there had been a worldwide Islamic revival. Islamist movements from Algeria to Pakistan had gained influence and engaged in sometimes bloody clashes with secular opponents. Islamist terrorist networks began to think more globally, with attacks on Western targets reaching a dramatic climax on September 11, 2001. In place of the old Cold War, and the brief optimism that had followed it, antagonists in both the West and the Islamic world now spoke of a "clash of civilizations." In some regions, such as Kashmir, Chechnya, and the Southern Philippines, nationalism and Islamic appeals found a ready fit, and separatist movements increasingly framed their movements as part of global *jihad*.

Indonesia was not unaffected by these developments. A trend of accelerated Islamization of society had been visible there since the late 1970s. After the fall of Soeharto in 1998, many small groups emerged that derived inspiration from the global Islamic radicalization of previous decades. For instance, Hizbut Tahrir (Party of God), a global Islamist movement founded in Jerusalem in 1953, built a thriving Indonesia branch and proclaimed that it wanted the reestablishment of a universal Islamic caliphate. New groups emerged to

propagate an austere Salafism based on the goal of returning Islam to the pure form practised by the *Salaf*, or pious predecessors, the first three generations after the Prophet Muhammad. Some groups, like Laskar Jihad engaged directly in violent *jihad* against Christians and other alleged enemies of the faith in Maluku and elsewhere. Shops and street stalls sold books and pamphlets on the views of Islamists such as Sayyid Qutb and Osama bin Laden, promoting a worldview that saw Islam and its enemies, principally the United States and Zionism, as locked in mortal combat. Street protests espoused global Islamic solidarity and condemned U.S. policies in Palestine, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. A small extremist fringe, notably the underground group Jemaah Islamiyah, acted on such views by bombings targeted at Christians and Westerners.

Aceh was a dramatic exception to these broad trends. It is not that there were no Islamist groups in Aceh; some are discussed in this chapter. Nor was there no Islamization of the public sphere. On the contrary, after Soeharto fell, the government dramatically reversed policy and allowed Aceh to implement aspects of *shari'a*. By the first years of the new millennium, a new *shari'a* court had been established, Islamic prescriptions on public morality were being enforced, and public canings were beginning to be meted out on transgressors. It seemed as if some of the long-suppressed hopes of Darul Islam were finally being realized.

Yet the main opponents of the government, GAM and the major protest groups, denied that they sought to enforce Islamic law, much less establish an Islamic state. Indeed, they condemned the introduction of *shari'a* as at best an irrelevance or at worst a trick designed to deceive the Acehnese or convince the outside world that the Acehnese were fanatics. They insisted that their political goals (independence, demilitarization, democracy, and the like) were not related to religion.

This was a puzzling situation that represented a dramatic break with Acehnese tradition and with GAM's own roots. As we have seen, GAM had grown from the remnants of Darul Islam, a movement that condemned the government for abrogating Islamic law and sought an Islamic state, not just in Aceh but throughout Indonesia. This vision had itself grown out of an earlier tradition that divided the world into Islam and its enemies. It was also puzzling because GAM leaders, like virtually all political actors in Aceh, agreed that Islam was central to Acehnese identity. Many were personally devout. At the grass roots of their movement, Islamic and nationalist discourses remained interpenetrated. At the leadership level, however, there was a separation.

This chapter looks at the reasons for this secularization. It gives three main explanations. The first explanation points to GAM's reading of the in-

ternational climate and its fear of jeopardizing Western support if "tainted" by Islamism. The secularization of discontent was in part but the latest example of how Acehnese nationalism was shaped by the shifting international context. The second explanation is more sociological and concerns the shifting base of the movement. Darul Islam in the 1950s was led largely by the religious scholars, the *ulama*, and their allies. Over subsequent decades, both modernist Islamic intellectuals and traditionalist *ulama* increasingly made peace with, or were co-opted by, the state as the state itself consolidated and established its presence in the territory. Most of the new nationalist leaders lacked specialist religious knowledge or interest.

The third and main explanation advanced in the chapter, however, concerns a logic of identity construction and differentiation. It will be recalled that in the 1950s Acehnese adherents of Darul Islam expressed their continuing commitment to the wider project of Islamizing Indonesia in terms of *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, or Islamic brotherhood. A similar commitment to the universal solidarity and fraternity of the *umma* underpinned the commitment of later Islamist activists who were concerned with global issues. In the 1950s, even though Acehnese leaders revolted against the Indonesian government, they still felt bound to their coreligionists elsewhere in the archipelago. Their defeat, and the subsequent institutionalization and territorialization of Acehnese ethnic identity, narrowed the horizons of Acehnese leaders, finally finding expression in Acehnese nationalism. Just as their shared Islamic faith had bound disillusioned Acehnese to Muslims elsewhere in Indonesia in the 1950s, so their later decision to secede drove them to deemphasize Islam. This process intensified when the state adopted a religious posture to undercut the appeal of separatism. Indonesian and Acehnese nationalism reversed positions. Almost in spite of themselves, GAM leaders made Islam less central to their political vision.

World Islamic Solidarity

As armed conflict reignited around them in the late 1990s, some Acehnese showed that they took the precepts of universal Islamic brotherhood literally. In late 2001 and early 2002, a group of students, most of them based at Aceh's main state university, Syiah Kuala University, organized a series of demonstrations against the United States and its allies. The reaction to these protests by local commanders of GAM reveals much about the changing politics of Islamic solidarity and nationalism in Aceh.

One protest occurred in October 2001, three days after the United States began its military assault on Afghanistan in retaliation for the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington. According to newspaper reports, several

hundred students and others gathered outside the Baiturrahman Mosque in Banda Aceh and burned an effigy of President George W. Bush and an American flag. Some carried posters bearing the image of Osama bin Laden (*Waspada*, October 11, 2001). Then, in early 2002, the Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa (BEM, Student Executive Body) of Syiah Kuala University held protests against visits to Aceh by the American and Australian ambassadors. Both visits were intended to publicly support peace negotiations, then under way for two years. The students described the visits as a form of Western intervention designed to undermine Islam. In the words of one of their statements, "Aceh is the land of the Muslims. Its inhabitants are over 95 percent Muslim. Because of that, we strongly reject a resolution of the Aceh case from those who are outside the framework of Islam."[1] The students also rejected America's attempts to enforce "hegemony" in Aceh and to use the conflict to further its desire for world domination.

The organizers of these protests were from a network of campus Islamic study groups, which had become an important feature of student life on many Indonesian campuses during the 1980s (Fealy 2002). Group members saw themselves as following the example of the Prophet Muhammad during his *hijrah* (migration), when he withdrew from the hostile environment of Mecca to establish a model Islamic society in Medina. They also drew inspiration from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. The Acehnese groups said their ultimate aim was to bring about a truly "perfect" form of Islamic state and society, involving "perfect implementation of *shari'a*." The way to achieve this was first to practice true Islam in their own circles, with the intermediate aim being the transformation of the universities into "Islamic campuses." In the words of Rahmat Fadhil, president of the BEM at Syiah Kuala University, "We have only one eternal and glorious ideal, an Islamic Caliphate (*khilafah*) [achieved] via an Islamic state (*daulah Islam*). Of course, the Islamic campus is its main prototype" (Fadhil 2002).

Drawing much of their support from students studying exact sciences (fertile recruiting grounds for religious fundamentalists the world over), the students inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood began to be elected to BEM and other campus leadership bodies on universities (especially state ones) throughout Indonesia in the late 1980s. They dominated elected bodies at Syiah Kuala University from 1999. During the nationwide student uprising against Soeharto in 1998 the same students established an Acehnese branch of Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (KAMMI, the Indonesian Islamic Students Action Union); later they formed Partai Keadilan, the Justice Party. Through these and other vehicles they campaigned on issues ranging from the local

(such as corruption in the provincial government) to the national (such as insertion of recognition of Islamic law in the constitution) and international (such as solidarity with Palestinians). This was a group that took the precepts of global Islamic solidarity seriously.

This group of campus Islamic activists was also rather unique in Aceh. As we have seen, after Soeharto fell in 1998, student activism exploded in Aceh. Most groups were somewhat Islamic in flavor, recruiting on such campuses as the State Islamic Institute in Banda Aceh, and drawing liberally on Islamic discourse. Even so, they rarely called for *shari'a*, the central demand of the 1950s. Instead, the major themes of student protest were condemnation of military abuses and support for a referendum.

By contrast, *shari'a* was the central concern of the students who were active in the BEM, KAMMI, and related groups. They believed that implementation of Islam as a "total system" was the only solution for Aceh's problems, including the armed conflict. In interviews with me they said they were neutral regarding nationalism. The key was not whether Aceh became independent or remained part of Indonesia, but which outcome would strengthen Islam. Consequently, they wished to expend their energy not promoting either Indonesian or Acehnese nationalism, but instead persuading society to return to Islam. They would not object to independence, but this was not their main concern. In the words of Rasmanuddin, head of KAMMI in Banda Aceh (as paraphrased by the tabloid *KutaRaja*), "Carrying out a referendum for Aceh is not a problem. Indeed, it can be a solution for the [Acehnese] self-respect which has been trampled upon in their efforts to uphold God's law in its entirety." But what happened in Aceh was only a small part of a wider picture of "the unity of the Islamic *umma* and its resilience in terms of bargaining position in the international arena to counteract the global scenario of the Zionists" (*KutaRaja*, March 24, 2002). This professed indifference to nationalism was not so dissimilar to many mainstream Islamic groups. What made these students distinctive was their willingness to link Aceh's struggle to a global Islamic framework, including by rejecting involvement of Western countries in conflict resolution in Aceh.

GAM's reaction to the protests described earlier was instructive. Spokespersons condemned the protests against the U.S. ambassador as having been "blessed" by the security forces (*Serambi Indonesia*, February 15, 2002). The aim, they said, was to isolate Aceh from international attention. As for demonstrations against the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan, GAM spokesperson Ayah Sofyan said the students should look at what is happening "in front of their eyes," where "almost every day Acehnese people, who are certainly Islamic, are

killed." He ordered the students to campaign instead against "violence against the Acehnese community, don't run an anti-American campaign" (*Waspada*, October 11, 2001).

A similar incident occurred in February 2002, when Laskar Jihad leader Ja'far Umar Thalib visited Aceh. Ja'far announced that the aim of his visit was to recruit volunteers and raise money to support the group's activities in Maluku, where it was engaged in a violent struggle with Christians. He made no secret of his dislike for GAM, announcing that "we are very sad about the conflict in Aceh, because whatever else may be the case, one thing which is occurring in Aceh at present is that Muslims in GAM and Muslims in the Indonesian military and police forces are killing one another" (*Waspada*, February 23, 2002). He was particularly concerned about Western involvement in the peace process:

> Yes, that is very saddening. Why don't we resolve the problem with Islamic methods, by returning to the Qur'an and Hadith. By foregrounding their Islamic character, the people of Aceh were once in the vanguard of resistance to the colonialists. Many of the ancestors of the Acehnese became *syuhada* [martyrs] and *mujahid* [*jihad* fighters] while defending independence from the Dutch colonialists. The question now is why GAM and our colleagues in the NGOs prefer to accept the presence of non-Islamic foreigners in resolving the Aceh problem. One can only call that very saddening, and a great backwards move.

Given that Laskar Jihad activities elsewhere had received secret backing from elements of the Indonesian armed forces, it was not surprising that GAM condemned the movement's entry into Aceh as part of a wider plot to divide the Acehnese against themselves and discredit them in the eyes of the international community. They announced that the organization was "banned" from Aceh. Once again, Ayah Sofyan was blunt: "If [Acehnese] want to join *jihad*, they don't need to go to Ambon; just join with GAM, we are also carrying out *jihad* to liberate Aceh" (*Serambi Indonesia*, 14 February 14, 2002). GAM's military spokesperson, Sofyan Dawood, added that the Acehnese had been religiously tolerant since the sultanate and now lived in harmony with "followers of other religions," and that GAM strongly opposed "Laskar Jihad's attempts to radicalize the Islamic *umma* in Aceh" (*Serambi Indonesia*, February 15, 2001).

These events, and the GAM response, encapsulate three features of the changing politics of Islam in Aceh. The first was the accusation that the government, TNI, and their allies were manipulating religion for political ends. The second was an attempt by GAM to distance itself from Islamism, especially to an international audience. The third, especially noteworthy, was GAM's view that the Acehnese should be concerned only with Aceh's problems. In the place of Daud Beureueh's understanding of Darul Islam as a ve-

hicle for *ukhuwah Islamiyah* we now see insistence that the Acehnese should not look beyond their own borders.

Islam and Nationalism: Affinity and Difference

How did the transformation take place? An initial point to emphasize is that the shift from the Islamism of Darul Islam to the more secular outlook of GAM was gradual. GAM emerged not only from political dynamics in Aceh, but also as part of a wider ferment on the fringes of radical Islam throughout Indonesia. In the mid-1970s, individuals in several provinces with links to the old Darul Islam were reactivating their networks. Eventually some of them participated in hijackings, bombings, and other violent acts. In the lead-up to the establishment of Aceh Merdeka, Daud Beureueh had reactivated his links with former Darul Islam supporters, and not only in Aceh. According to some versions, in 1976 he was sworn in as the head of a renewed Indonesia-wide Darul Islam network that was reestablishing itself underground (see, for example, Abduh 2001, 28). Daud also had links with a network of Islamic activists who later formed the so-called Komando Jihad in Medan (*Waspada*, January 8, 1978; Sulaiman 2000, 10). The Acehnese students at the University of North Sumatra in Medan who formed the nucleus of Aceh Merdeka recall meeting regularly with Komando Jihad activists like Gaos Taufik before the establishment of Aceh Merdeka (Husaini Hasan, interview with author, Stockholm, June 13, 2004). GAM's emergence was part of a wider radicalization prompted by anger about the marginalization of Islam in Indonesian politics and society.

Between the 1970s and early 1990s, leaders of GAM, as well as calling for Acehnese independence, continued to espouse formal Islamic goals suited to the Darul Islam tradition. The fact that the famous *ulama* and Darul Islam veteran Tengku Ilyas Leube became minister of justice in the Aceh Merdeka cabinet was itself a sign of the movement's attitudes toward *shari'a*. Some of the organization's documents from this period suggest that it aimed to establish an "Islamic State of Sumatra-Aceh." Hasan di Tiro himself spoke openly in such terms to the international press. GAM still treated the Indonesian state ideology of Pancasila as a shibboleth, denigrating it as a "polytheistic teaching" and "religion of the Javanese, the world view of the Javanese, the ancestral values of the Javanese nation, obtained from Majapahit and replete with myths" (Linge 1992, 23). There was thus no sharp break between GAM and its Islamic roots, as some of the organization's Islamist detractors later suggested (Al Chaidar 2000; Abu Jihad 2000a, 2000b).[2] Even so, over time the three factors introduced earlier did drive the movement away from those roots.

International Trends

One factor was the search for international, especially Western, support. We have already seen in previous chapters that the global context in which GAM operated had a formative influence on its ideology and strategy. From the start, Hasan di Tiro's connections to U.S. Cold War networks had made him aware of the importance of gaining backing from powerful players on the international scene. When he founded Aceh Merdeka, he wrote a letter to his friend General Edward Landsdale, assuring him that "I am trying very hard to achieve my national objective within the American frame of reference."[3]

Some of those who split with Hasan di Tiro and still claimed loyalty to Darul Islam ideals later suggested that di Tiro's desire to win Western support motivated him to abandon Islamic goals when he formed GAM in 1976. In this view, the downgrading of Islam was, in the words of Aceh Merdeka founder Husaini Hasan, a tactical question about "how we presented ourselves to the world" (interview with author, Stockholm, July 5, 2002). Usman Hanafi agreed that di Tiro always said that overemphasizing Islam would "frighten the outside world" (interview with author, Simpang Ulim, November 14, 2007). But it would be wrong to read too much into this. In the 1970s, hostility to Islamic radicalism was not the major concern of Western policymakers that it became after the Iranian revolution, and as has already been explained, the break from Islamic appeals and goals was not sharp.

Moreover, Aceh Merdeka was keen to get international Islamic support if it could. In 1985, di Tiro told another American friend that "having failed to get Western audience, I had to concentrate on the Islamic World and succeeding [sic]."[4] In the 1980s, he approached Iran via its embassy in Stockholm and was very supportive of the Islamic revolution in several media interviews.[5] The attempt came to nothing, apparently because the Iranians insisted that the Acehnese adhere to Shia Islam, which was widely viewed as deviant by the Sunni population of Aceh (interviews with author, Stockholm, July 2002). GAM leaders also developed ties with the Muslim Institute, a small organization in London led by Kalim Siddiqui, an Indian by origin and follower of the Pakistani Islamist Abul Ala Maududi. The institute was influenced by the Iranian model and "sought to find a way to liberate Muslims from the Western concepts of democracy and other liberal doctrines, and to promote an Islam-based revolution in ways of thinking and organizing political power" (Kepel 1997, 141). Many of Hasan di Tiro's most militantly Islamic writings from this period were addressed to seminars organized by the institute. His cause also received sympathetic coverage in several international Islamist publications (such

as *Kayhan International* of Iran and *Crescent International* of Canada), presumably through the Muslim Institute link.

During this period di Tiro and other GAM leaders sometimes still identified their movement as part of a worldwide struggle between Islam and the West. In 1984, for example, di Tiro addressed an audience of Muslim journalists in London in a talk entitled "385 Years of Confrontation Between Islam and *Kufr* [Unbelief] in Indonesia, 1599–1984," referring to "the confrontation that has been going on in Southeast Asia from 1599 as fundamentally a conflict where no hold was barred between the predatory Western Christian civilization and the Islamic civilization" (di Tiro 1984b, 5). A trace of the old pan-Islamic framework dating to Darul Islam and before was still plainly visible.

But this was also a period when di Tiro was in difficult straits and searching for allies wherever he could find them. Thus, in an interview with a Portuguese newspaper, he frankly admitted that the movement sought an Islamic state, but also that it wanted good relations with Western countries:

> We will not follow anybody. We will not imitate or copy Iran or any other Muslim country. We have our own model and our own tradition. An Islamic state has nothing to do necessarily with a government by the "priests" (if that is what you understand by "mullahs") because there is no priesthood in Islam. An Islamic state is a constitutional state, with the Holy Qur'an as its written Constitution, with the practices of the Prophet Muhammad as its precedents, with deliberations and consensus as its vehicles, with truth and justice as its goal.[6]

The impression that arises is of a movement ready to hedge its bets and portray its goals in different ways to attract different international audiences. After these early attempts, GAM found the succor it needed in Libya, and Islamist language began to fade from its public materials. By the late 1990s, however, the movement's leaders had made a firm judgment that the audience that counted was in the West. Key turning points were the successful secessions in the former Eastern bloc in the early 1990s and, especially, the separation in 1999 of East Timor from Indonesia, in which Western support was crucial. In 1999 GAM leaders made internationalizing the Aceh conflict a key strategy (see the next chapter). By this time, opposition to Islamic radicalism was also prominent in the foreign policy of Western powers. GAM leaders in private meetings were now frank about how important it was for them to convince Western governments that they were not fundamentalists and that they had no links to global Islamist networks. Hence, for example, when the September 11, 2001, attacks took place in the United States the GAM field commander, Abdullah Syafi'ie, according to one source, was the first person in Indonesia to telephone the U.S. ambassador to express condolences. Whenever reports appeared in the

international media that GAM had al-Qaeda links or was motivated by Islamic fundamentalism, GAM leaders hurriedly denied them. The winds of international opportunity had changed, and GAM had changed with them.

Sociology

Another explanation for secularization is the shifting social base of the rebellion. The social background of GAM leaders was very different from that of the leaders of Darul Islam. The older movement was primarily led by *ulama*, specialist religious scholars who ran Islamic educational institutions. Even most *zuama*—the professional politicians and administrators who were a secondary leadership group—had *madrasah* or *dayah* educations and possessed "considerable knowledge of Islam" (Sjamsuddin 1985, 6). The first generation of GAM leaders in the 1970s had family ties to Darul Islam but included few *ulama*.

By the late 1990s, the social background of GAM leaders had shifted downward and outward, into the countryside and overseas. The main leaders lived far from Aceh in the liberal environs of Europe or in Singapore and Malaysia. Although some were devout, exile gave them all a worldly and cosmopolitan outlook. On the other hand, GAM's growth in rural districts drove the movement away from the more austere Islam of the towns and toward the more mystical and traditionalist faith of the countryside. In explaining these shifts we must seek an explanation not so much in the internal dynamics of GAM as in the broader transformation of religious life in Aceh and in the changing relations between religious elites and the state.

In the first place, the urban constituency of the modernist *ulama* was greatly transformed by political stabilization and economic growth. The children of the preachers, entrepreneurs, and officials who had led Darul Islam became the new technocratic elite who dominated provincial politics. The modernists also lost their independent institutional base as many of their *madrasah* were transformed into state schools and as new generations of the elite were recruited into the bureaucracy and government education institutions. A poignant sign of this intergenerational change occurred in 1982 when one of Daud Beureueh's sons paraded the ageing and incapacitated former Darul Islam leader before the press to campaign for Golkar. The modernist, urban elite was not fertile ground for rebellion.

GAM's adherents did, however, become closer to the rural world of traditionalist Islam. Many traditionalist *ulama* had been foes of the religious reformers of PUSA and Darul Islam, but they maintained an independent institutional base that was resistant to government intervention in their *dayah*, the Islamic boarding schools in which most Acehnese boys spent a period

acquiring basic religious knowledge. The local *ulama*, or *tengku*, his *dayah*, and the networks of devoted religious students, or *santri*, that grew up around them were a ubiquitous presence in rural Aceh, where GAM itself grew. Most GAM recruits, like other village boys, had been educated, if only briefly, in a *dayah*. In many cases, they brought with them into the movement the social networks and friendships they had formed there. Some low-ranking *tengku* became active in GAM's ranks. Especially after the movement expanded in 1998, many such people joined its civilian structure, often as *kadi*, religious judges who adjudicated on disputes and punished wrongdoers, or as *imeum teuntara*, men who gave religious training to other fighters. Those who did so were almost never senior *ulama* with *dayah* of their own but rather *guru ngaji* (religious teachers), often senior *santri* who helped the *ulama* by teaching junior students, or individuals who were simply respected in their village for having religious knowledge somewhat above the average.

A few more senior *ulama* became directly involved in GAM. Teungku Abdullah Saleh, an *ulama* from Jeunieb, on the north coast, was a campaigner for a referendum after 1999 and led prayers and made religious speeches at GAM events during the insurgency years. GAM planned to appoint him as *Kadi Negara* (State Kadi), but he died in the jungle during the military emergency in 2003. A more famous *ulama* with GAM connections was Tgk H. Muhammad Waly Al Khalidy (Waled Tanoh Mirah), the leader of a *dayah* of several hundred students at Tanoh Mirah, a few hundred meters from the main Banda Aceh-Medan road in North Aceh. He was the son of the highly respected *ulama* Tgk Syekh Abdullah, the founder (in 1956) of the Tanoh Mirah school who in turn had been a student of Abu Syekh H Muhammad Waly Al Khalidy, one of the most famous and revered *ulama* in Aceh's history (one of only four, according to a pronouncement made by a forum of *ulama*, who had reached the level of *ma'rifatullah*, a person with a superior intuitive knowledge of God; *Serambi Indonesia*, May 7, 2007). Despite his blue-blooded lineage, the younger Al Khalidy had a reputation for wildness during his youth, when he was famous as a boxer and as a fan of Western-style music. He changed his ways when he took over the *dayah* at the age of twenty-seven after his father's death in 1989. Several of the most important GAM leaders on the east coast, such as Tgk Abdullah Syafi'ie, Tgk Batee, Tgk Muslim Hasballah, and Tgk Ilyas Pase, were former students at the Tanoh Mirah *dayah*. In the post-Soeharto period, the *dayah* became known as a stronghold of GAM and referendum campaigning. Student activists spoke of it as a center of an Acehnese "liberation theology." In 2003, during the military emergency, Waled Tanoh Mirah was arrested, accused of treason for supporting GAM, and tortured savagely.

Later, after the 2005 peace deal, he became a religious advisor to the Komite Peralihan Aceh (KPA, Aceh Transitional Committee) the organization for former GAM combatants.

But even this story of an apparently militant *ulama* underscores the ambivalent relations that GAM had with traditional religious authority. By his own account, during the DOM years of 1990 to 1997, Waled Tanoh Mirah had been "very close" to, even "cultivated" by, the government and army. He also stressed that even after 1999 he had no formal relations with GAM. If GAM people admired him, he said, this was simply because he was close to the people in his district. Some GAM people claimed him and other *ulama* as their own simply to bolster their prestige and authority (interview with author, Tanoh Mirah, February 19, 2007).

Traditionalist scholars like Waled Tanoh Mirah were not natural rebels. There are strong traditions of quietism and deference to state authority in mainstream Sunni Islam, especially in the Syafi'i school that is dominant in Aceh as in other parts of Indonesia. According to a strand in Syafi'i school thinking dating to the medieval period, religious scholars share an "overriding responsibility . . . to safeguard Islam and the community of believers" (Fealy 1998, 51, 50–68). This view inclined them strongly to accommodate state authority, as did their preference for even tyrannical order over anarchy. As one younger *ulama* explained to me, "It is obligatory according to the Syafi'i school to be obedient to the government; we must submit even to a government formed by a coup d'etat" (Tengku Faisal, first secretary of HUDA, interview with author, Aceh Besar, June 5, 2002).

Thus, in the 1950s, leading traditionalist *ulama* in Aceh were among the strongest opponents of Darul Islam. In South Aceh, for example, followers of Syekh Wali Al Khalidy organized armed militias to oppose the rebels. He and other traditionalist *ulama* issued *fatwa* declaring the national government to be legitimate according to Islamic law because it did not degrade religion and because its laws resembled Islamic ones. Darul Islam itself, they declared, was *bughat*—unsanctioned and illegal rebellion against state authority (Sulaiman 1997, 361–362). In part these traditionalists opposed Darul Islam because the reformers who led it wanted to eliminate ritual practices (such as recitation of the *qunut* prayer at dawn) that the traditionalists viewed as central to their faith. There had been bitter debates on such matters dating back to the 1930s (Sulaiman 1997, 66–69).

These attitudes toward authority and opposition remained influential among traditionalist scholars and meant they were not natural bedfellows of GAM. When I asked Waled Tanoh Mirah about whether GAM was also

bughat, his reply was instructive, as the following summary of my interview notes suggests:

> The Waled said his father used to say that Abu Syekh Khalidy (at Labuhan Haji) said rebellion was *bughat*. But his father also said that if the Acehnese together determined that Aceh had not legally joined Indonesia, then people who rebelled against the government and were killed could be considered to have died as martyrs. The ruling in such cases was that they were martyrs (*Hukumnya mati syahid*). His father said this, but only to a very limited number of people, he did not state it publicly. The Waled did not personally take this as his own guideline, however. He did not know what sources his father had drawn upon to reach this conclusion. And it was equivocal: his father said *supposing that* Aceh was not legally part of Indonesia, then rebels would be martyrs. Whenever people asked him, Waled himself repeated that rebellion against a legitimate government was forbidden. This was the popular view, the normal view. But all this left open the question of whether the government, and the way that Aceh joined Indonesia, was legal or not. If it was legal, then rebellion was *bughat*. His father never explained, and he himself does not know the legal basis for answering that question. Moreover, the basis of GAM's struggle was not religion. Their struggle was for rights (*hak*). Rights depend on acknowledgement by the outside world. It is different, for example, from inheritance: that is purely a religious question. But if you are talking about whether Aceh is a state or merely a region, that depends on the view of the outside world: if we demand our rights as a nation, there must be someone who acknowledges those rights. [Interview with author, February 19, 2007]

This is a revealing response in several ways. It illustrates the legalistic tone that is typical of traditionalist *ulama*, as well as their deference to scholarly lineage and the authority of their teachers. More important for our purposes, it reveals great cautiousness concerning the central question of the legality of revolt, and it underlines the importance of the shift from religious to secular justification for it. Even the religious legitimacy of the revolt is made dependent on sovereignty, international law, and politics.

If Waled Tanoh Mirah was ambivalent about GAM, he was in fact exceptional in how far he went to accommodate the movement. Most *ulama* wanted above all to maintain the integrity of their *dayah* as places where they could transmit Islamic learning and tradition to new generations of *santri*. Moreover, *ulama* were vulnerable to repression. They were venerated figures in their local communities, and news of their activities, if they supported GAM, would inevitably spread quickly and come to the attention of security officials, as Waled Tanoh Mirah's own fate revealed. Some GAM members, when asked why *ulama* did not actively support them, simply replied that the military would have burned their *dayah* had they done so.

Overall, the dominant trend among traditionalist *ulama* during the New Order years was thus political neutralization and co-optation by the state rather than rebellion. We have already touched on one manifestation of this in

Chapter 4: the gradual faltering of Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) as an opposition force and the willingness of growing numbers of *ulama* to endorse Golkar in election campaigns. Perhaps most fatally for their authority, this political co-optation was accompanied by distribution of state largesse, such that local newspapers routinely featured reports of government officials visiting *dayah* and donating money or materials to assist the construction of new facilities, accompanied by none-too-subtle suggestions that the *ulama* in question would support Golkar.

In this context, many *ulama* in the New Order period were "drawn into the army's counterinsurgency campaign as spokesmen for the government cause" (Kell 1995, 77). Many of them delivered sermons and issued *fatwa* explaining that the government was legitimate, that Muslims were forbidden to create disorder, that GAM was *bughat*, and even that the blood of rebels was *halal* (Kell 1995, 77–80; Sulaiman 2000, 79). Particularly prominent in this regard, for example, was the *ulama* Tgk H Usman Kuta Krueng, who not only gave sermons on such matters but even traveled to Malaysia to help persuade some GAM detainees to return to their homeland. (When some of them were later killed upon their return, GAM fighters blamed him for leading their comrades back to their deaths.)

The fruits were visible after Soeharto fell, when intellectuals, journalists, and others criticized the *ulama* in an unprecedentedly direct manner, accusing them of being silent or of cooperating when the army killed and tortured civilians. It was a common refrain that *ulama* in Aceh had ceased to be *panutan* (role models, good examples)—a shocking refutation of the mythology about the *ulama* that had been propagated for much of the preceding century. Some student activists condemned *ulama* such as Tgk Kuta Krueng by name for collaborating with the military. GAM leaders were also vociferous. The following account of a statement relayed by telephone by the GAM spokesperson for the Blang Pidie area, Ayah Manggeng, to a journalist was typical:

> Until today, *ulama* in Aceh are not brave enough to uphold *amar makruf nahi mungkar* [a Qur'anic phrase meaning "enjoining good and preventing evil"]. Ayah Manggeng even made the accusation that there are among the *ulama* of Aceh those who indirectly receive bribes from the government of the Republic of Indonesia for the sake of their personal benefit, with the result that many of the Acehnese people become victims. Because of this, he once more warned, don't let there be among the *ulama* of Aceh any who attempt to betray the Acehnese nation. [*Waspada*, September 15, 2001]

Not surprisingly, in the post-Soeharto period, many *ulama* had difficult relations with GAM. Some whispered about threats and extortion attempts by gunmen. There were reports that some were detained or beaten by fighters.

Ulama who had most vocally endorsed military operations in the past were especially fearful. Yet the respect they enjoyed in their local communities meant that few were physically harmed. Many GAM fighters, as part of village society, still viewed their local *tengku* as a source of religious advice or assistance in times of trouble (thus GAM fighters often hid among the *santri* in a *dayah* when on the run). On the other hand, the military still saw the *ulama* as a potential counter to GAM and pressured them to endorse counterinsurgency operations.

As the armed conflict slowly turned back in the government's favor, security officials pressured *ulama* to rejoin the campaign against GAM. The first sign that the *ulama* were beginning to waver politically, in 2000–2001, was that most of them stopped talking about a referendum. According to one leader of Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh (HUDA), they instead decided to "watch," "be silent," and "take no attitude whatsoever." This position was consistent with their attitude that it was incumbent upon *ulama* to obey the government. They had proposed a referendum in 1999 simply as "input." Once the government did not accept it and evinced no goodwill to solve the Aceh crisis, that was the end of the matter (Tgk Faisal, interview with author, Aceh Besar, June 5, 2002). As the military became more confident, officers increasingly pressured *ulama* openly to rejoin the counterinsurgency campaign. Demands that they condemn GAM reached a crescendo after the declaration of martial law in May 2003. A local police official in Bireuen, for example, was quoted in *Serambi Indonesia* (June 9, 2003) as saying that "the security forces can be firm in prosecuting their duties, but the *ulama* also need to be firm in stating that right is right and wrong is always wrong. The *ulama* shouldn't just be brave enough to say this and that to the security forces, but when it comes to GAM just remain silent." In these circumstances, although some *ulama* tried to remain aloof, others once more endorsed the military's campaign. Eventually the main *ulama* council, the Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU, Ulama Consultative Council), declared sedition to be prohibited by Islam (*Serambi Indonesia*, August 18, 2003).

But we are running ahead of ourselves. The important point is that the overall trend through the New Order years was convergence of religious authority and the state, and precipitous decline of the independent political role of the *ulama*. The *ulama* had emerged as important leaders in the war against the Dutch, seized political authority during the Indonesian revolution, and tried to defend it during Darul Islam. By the late Soeharto period, the consolidation of state authority meant that the *ulama* were shadows of their former political selves. They had become reactive, buffeted by forces beyond their control and no longer able to set the agenda. Moreover, the traditionalists

were doctrinally conservative and by temperament not inclined to challenge state authority. Although social proximity in rural areas drove the *ulama* and GAM together, politics and doctrine drove them apart.

Identity Formation

The preceding two factors, although important, do not sufficiently explain GAM's gradual abandonment of Islamism. It may be true, for example, that GAM leaders sought international support, but Islamic separatist movements elsewhere found succor from Islamic states or global *jihadi* networks. Why did GAM not take this course? Likewise, although it may have been true that religious authority was co-opted by the state, why did this not produce Islamic radicalization, or an attempt by GAM to outbid the discredited *ulama*?

The explanation advanced here is that the fading of the Islamic element also reflected GAM's nationalist ideology. Previous chapters depicted Acehnese nationalism as the product of a long history of political defeats for Islamic forces in the territory. These defeats produced a narrowing of the horizons of Aceh's Islamic leaders, a successive localization and territorialization of identity, and eventual realization of the distinctiveness of Indonesian, Acehnese, and Islamic identities and goals.

This process began early. The victory of the Dutch at the beginning of the twentieth century ended the efforts of the nineteenth-century *ulama* to generate pan-Islamic support for their struggle. The Dutch East Indies became the administrative and territorial framework within which unity against colonial domination was generated. Acehnese developed links with coreligionists in other parts of the Indies, and the idea of Indonesia became the organizing framework for opposition to the Dutch. But Acehnese, Indonesian, and Islamic identities were at this point hardly differentiated: not only were Indonesia and Aceh united through Islam, but it was intended that both would be established on an Islamic basis. The defeat of Darul Islam saw the failure of this vision as Muslims elsewhere (in the view of the Acehnese leaders) failed to defend the faith. This defeat again narrowed the focus of Acehnese leaders, this time on what they could achieve in Aceh alone. The special territory framework, especially when it failed to deliver Islamic law, in turn set the scene for GAM and its call for a complete break with Indonesia.

During the first phase of Acehnese alienation from Indonesia, it was natural that disillusioned Acehnese leaders reemphasized the coincidence of Acehnese and Islamic identities. From the early 1950s they evinced a belief that they were better Muslims than Muslims in other parts of the country. Darul Islam leaders condemned the "Hinduism," "polytheism," and "atheism" of the

Javanese. GAM leaders also, at least early on, equated Java with unbelief. However, during the 1970s and 1980s, there was still common ground between GAM and Islamists elsewhere in Indonesia, because this was a time when the New Order regime was characterized by what its Islamist critics labeled *Islam-phobia*. The regime persecuted Islamic activists, proscribed advocacy of an Islamic state, and insisted that all Islamic social organizations adopt Pancasila as their "sole ideological foundation." Hasan di Tiro, in his 1984 speech before the Muslim Institute in London thus denigrated the army commander, Benny Moerdani, as "a Roman Catholic butcher" and head of a "Javanese/Indonesian army with half-a-million non-descript mercenary soldiers to suppress Islam!" (di Tiro 1984b, 9). Incendiary rhetoric about Christian plots to destroy Islam was common on the radical fringes of Indonesian Islam at the time. When the New Order was at the height of its power, GAM and Islamist dissenters elsewhere in the country thus shared a common enemy in the "anti-Islamic" New Order state, thus blurring the boundary between them. It thus made sense for di Tiro at this point to depict Aceh's struggle, as he did in London, as part of a centuries' old struggle of Islam in the archipelago. The final remnants of the old Darul Islam view of Islam as a force uniting Aceh to Indonesia were still visible.

Ironically, however, an eventual byproduct of the adoption of the independence goal was diminished emphasis on Islam. Darul Islam leaders, including Hasan di Tiro himself, had always recognized that Islam was a bond that tied the Acehnese to most other Indonesians, not something that set them apart. A downgrading of Islam was already implicit in di Tiro's emphasis on history and ethnicity as a foundation for Acehnese nationalism. This trend was accentuated when, after the fall of Soeharto, Indonesian leaders finally recognized that Islam might bind Aceh once more to Indonesia. At this point, the separate logics of Islamic unity and national identity construction drove religion and nationalism apart.

Islamization of Government

After 1999, the central government began to promote implementation of *shari'a* in Aceh, a dramatic reversal of the situation in the 1950s when this had been the main demand of the rebels. *Shari'a* was central to the special autonomy laws passed for Aceh. Law Number 44 in 1999 provided that special status for Aceh in the field of religious life would be "in the form of the implementation of Islamic *Shari'a* for its adherents in social life." The 2001 special autonomy law allowed the province to establish a legal apparatus to enforce *shari'a*, including a *shari'a* court. The provincial government and legislature acted quickly on these

laws, passing regulations that set basic guidelines to implement Islamic prescriptions in social relations, worship, dress, and the like.

The content of Aceh's new regime of *shari'a* enforcement needs to be sketched here only briefly (for more discussion, see International Crisis Group 2006). There were two basic elements. The first element was the administrative apparatus, consisting of three branches: a *shari'a* bureau (*dinas syariah*) to administer the new rules; a *shari'a* police force (*wilayatul hisbah*), whose job it was to enforce *shari'a* codes, especially regarding public morality; and the new *shari'a* court, whose job was to try offenders and mete out punishments. The second element was the new rules themselves: a series of local regulations and governor's instructions that provided the framework for putting aspects of *shari'a* into effect. Some of these rules consisted largely of proclamations about the Islamic character of Aceh, and exhortations for residents and visitors to obey Islamic law. Over successive years more precise and punitive provisions were passed, most of them enforcing public observance of Islamic codes of moral conduct. Offenses punishable by caning, fines, or imprisonment included *maisir* (gambling), *khalwat* (illicit relations between men and women), and *khamar* (sale and consumption of alcohol). There were also provisions allowing punishment of Muslims who did not observe fast or attend the weekly Friday prayers. By 2006 the *ulama* council had prepared a draft regulation mandating amputation in certain cases of theft.

A public campaign to enforce Islamic behavior began even before the new rules were put in place. The most visible manifestation was pressure on women to wear the *jilbab* headscarf. Beginning in 1999, this pressure first took the form of vigilante-style mob action; later the police were involved. Following the establishment of the *wilayatul hisbah*, in early 2004 jilbab raids (*razia jilbab*) became more frequent. Sweeps of popular recreation places, such as beaches, hotels, and nighttime cafes, also targeted other violations, especially proximity of men and women. The thrust of these activities was, in the preferred phrase of the bureaucrats in charge, *sosialisasi*, or socialization, by which those caught were informed and guided about *shari'a* and its importance. A new phase began in June 2005 when authorities began to cane some wrongdoers publicly.

These regulations were only part of a range of policies designed to Islamize the face of government in Aceh. For instance, a new *ulama* consultative council, the MPU, was established and declared to be equivalent in status to the provincial legislature (in fact, it was empowered only to provide input into policy formulation). A *baitul mal* (treasury) managed collection of alms (*zakat*). New funding was provided to *dayah* and other Islamic institutions, and there were ambitious plans to fuse Islamic and state education.

These policy changes were made possible by democratization of national politics and the changing place of Islam therein. By 1999 the intense antagonism that had once divided the government and political Islam had been blunted by decades of societal Islamization. In the late 1980s, Soeharto had already begun to Islamize the image of his government; Islamic activists had even more access to power after Soeharto fell. A new Islamic bloc in the national parliament saw unrest in Aceh as a byproduct of the previous regime's marginalization of Islam, and promoted *shari'a* and other Islamic solutions for it. PPP and Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) legislators thus played a big role in drafting the new Aceh autonomy laws. A group of modernist Muslim intellectuals around President Habibie (1998–1999) thought the same way and were crucial in designing his government's policy. Habibie's successor, the Javanese *ulama* Abdurrahman Wahid, was well connected to Acehnese traditionalist networks and also emphasized that *shari'a* could overcome the conflict there. These national elites were inclined to view the Aceh conflict through the old prism that defined Aceh in terms of Islam and as part of long-standing disputes about the place of Islam in national politics.

The government's policies were also calculated responses to the unrest gripping the territory and the possibility of secession. Escalation of Acehnese demands had made once unimaginable concessions seem reasonable. Part of the strategic logic was to win over local allies. In Chapter 5 we saw how the collapse of government authority in Aceh led to wavering commitment to Indonesia by local elite groups. Islamic politicians, such as those in PAN and PPP, toyed with throwing in their lot with the referendum movement, as did the traditionalist *ulama*. Implementation of *shari'a* was a way for the central government to win back these groups. They in turn found *shari'a* attractive not only for religious reasons but also because they were looking for ways to bolster their legitimacy and demonstrate their loyalty to Acehnese identity. Reemphasizing Aceh's Islamic character was a way to compete with GAM's attempt to paint itself as the only authentic embodiment of Acehnese tradition.

Shari'a was also intended to isolate GAM. Some officials responsible for designing the policy said this openly. The head of President Habibie's advisory team on Aceh, Usman Hasan, explained in July 1999 that a declaration that *shari'a* would be implemented would be a "breakthrough" in the handling of the Aceh conflict:

> Because with such a statement it would soon be sorted out whether GAM was Islamic or not. If it was proved not to be Islamic, the people would not support it. I am convinced that if GAM is indeed an Islamic movement, it will not use violence and cause chaos everywhere. [*Kompas*, July 25, 1999]

Two months later Aceh's governor, Syamsuddin Mahmud, stated, "If GAM does not support *shari'a*, it will be too much. After all, it is the foundation of life in which the community believes and carries out" (*Kompas*, September 8, 1999). A modernist Muslim scholar who later occupied a senior position in the government's new *shari'a* infrastructure in the province argued that in the short term implementation of *shari'a* would not ameliorate the conflict, because GAM's aims were separatist, not religious. In the long term, however, if the community found themselves in an Islamic environment they would no longer be "interested in rebellion":

> Now, the community does not feel it has an obligation to defend the government; nor do they feel they have an obligation to obey the government. But if we were already carrying out *shari'a*, they would no longer be brave enough to oppose, or they would no longer want to oppose, the government. [Confidential interview, Banda Aceh, June 9, 2002]

The military also began to mobilize Islamic theology in its attempt to defeat the insurgency. Beginning around 2000 there was a concerted attempt to Islamize the military's image in Aceh. Much of this effort involved little more than window dressing—Arabic prayers printed on military vehicles, or soldiers ostentatiously praying in public or helping to repair village prayer halls. Military officers also denounced GAM as an anti-Islamic force. In the words of one officer, "GAM embraces secularism, it cares nothing for religion" (*Waspada*, January 16, 2002). In 2002 an officer from the army's information task force condemned GAM for "basically never including Islam as the foundation for its struggle" and underlined that the movement did take account of "religious piety" when recruiting (*Serambi Indonesia*, May 1, 2002). The overall military commander in Aceh, Endang Suwarya, ordered the Acehnese to "implement Islamic *shari'a* well. Whoever supports Islamic *shari'a* also supports the extermination of GAM . . . because GAM actions deviate greatly from the Islamic faith" (*Serambi Indonesia*, February 23, 2004).

One aspect of the military propaganda was striking: it attacked GAM for violating the unity of the Islamic community. The most effective military spokesperson in this regard was the South Sulawesi-born officer Syarifudin Tippe, who served in Aceh in several senior posts. He became well-known for delivering sermons, in which he would quote the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, and classical Islamic history to enjoin against rebellion. Interestingly, he did so partly by evoking the ideals of Islamic brotherhood in ways that echoed both the old Darul Islam and the more contemporary global Islamic solidarity of some students. In one typical lecture he reminded his listeners of the role of the "Western powers who are *notabene kafir*" in "splitting and dividing Islamic unity,"

thus producing a proliferation of nation-states in the Arab world. Western orientalists, being fearful of unified Islam, had caused territorial division in the Middle East. The implications for Aceh were clear: the secessionist movement was simply the latest attempt to break up "the Islamic brotherhood amongst the Islamic *umma*":

> In that context, we see that apparently there is a great potential for these orientalists and secularists to "set their sights" on Aceh, as the biggest Islamic base area and enclave in Indonesia. Efforts heading in this direction have long been clearly visible. Attempts to play the majority Muslim population off against the TNI, who are also Muslims, and to make them confront one another, are one indication of this. Unfortunately, the Islamic *umma* itself has not responded wisely to the civil-military conflict fanned by those who come dressed in "humanitarian clothes." On the contrary, what has happened has been excessive and euphoric belief in the Western world, especially those states or parties who are prepared to inject large sums of funding. [Tippe 2001, 240–241]

Tippe's target here was Acehnese human rights groups that criticized the military, and their foreign backers. The important point, however, was the change of dynamics. In the 1950s it was the Aceh rebels who spoke of their ties with Darul Islam in terms of Islamic brotherhood, *ukhuwah Islamiyah*. In the post-Soeharto period, government officials used similar language to defend the unitary state. The government was finally recognizing the power of Islam to bind Aceh to the rest of Indonesia.

Secularization of Opposition

Even in the post-Soeharto period, GAM and its allies still bore the stamp of their Islamic origins. Thus, when GAM first reappeared during early post-Soeharto protests, there were reports that some local commanders tried to enforce *shari'a* locally, for instance, by calling on women to wear the *jilbab* or ordering shops and food stalls to close during prayer times (*Waspada*, May 31, 1999; October 27, 1999). Men with specialist religious knowledge—the *imeum teuntara*, *kadi*, and even some *ulama*—still had a part, although a minor one, in the movement's structure. Some grassroots leaders still expressed themselves in an Islamic idiom when addressing supporters in rural areas. According to several informants who witnessed GAM sermons in villages in 1999, GAM propagandists not only espoused purely nationalist themes; they also described their struggle as a *jihad fisabilillah*, sang the *hikayat prang sabi*, and spoke of fighters killed in combat as dying martyrs' deaths.

There was much internal variety. One GAM propagandist in Bireuen, for example, later explained to me that he used to tell rural people that GAM's struggle was a "religious obligation," that it "continued" the struggle of the

Prophet and was guided by the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* (confidential interview, Bireuen, June 13, 2007). He was a former teacher in a *dayah* and apparently held these views sincerely. In some areas, however, especially around small towns, the younger men who joined the movement were less interested in religious matters. One *panglima sagoe* in Bireuen said that it was "no fun" to join GAM units led by older men, because they would stop them from joking around and "make sure that everybody prayed and punish us if we didn't." Even he, however, admitted that "in the interior, GAM people always wrapped whatever we did in religion" (confidential interview, Bireuen, August 19, 2006).

In short, GAM still reflected the Islamic social environment in which it operated, but there was a dramatic contrast to the 1950s when *shari'a* had been central to the program of the Darul Islam rebels. After 1999, when the government offered *shari'a* to Aceh, GAM leaders and other Acehnese nationalists were in a difficult position. They could not reject *shari'a*, the system of rules designed to guide the behavior of every Muslim. Yet they still had an overriding imperative to differentiate Aceh from Indonesia and condemn the government. GAM leaders thus never produced a clear blueprint of the constitutional order for which they aimed, and they did not spell out the precise place that Islam would occupy in the laws of an independent Aceh. Their chief response was instead to describe *shari'a* implementation as a "trick" or "lullaby" to deceive the *ulama* and the people (*Serambi Indonesia*, December 14, 2000, March 25, 2002). When government officials emphasized *shari'a* more in their propaganda, GAM leaders responded in kind, condemning its implementation more vigorously. There were three main themes in these responses.

The first theme, especially early on, was that *shari'a* was simply an inappropriate response to the crisis gripping the territory. Numerous student activists, GAM leaders, intellectuals, and even some *ulama* said that the conflict in Aceh was not a consequence of the denial of *shari'a*. The Acehnese, they said, were calling not for Islamic law but for an end to human rights abuses, a referendum, independence, and so on. Such critics often had little to say about whether it was right or wrong in principle to implement *shari'a;* they simply believed it missed the point. A second theme, not surprising given the attempts to persuade Western powers to become involved in Aceh at this time, was to say that *shari'a* implementation was a plot by the central government to depict the Acehnese as fanatics in the eyes of the outside world. In the words of one GAM fighter I interviewed, implementation of *shari'a* was just "propaganda so that the West would be allergic to Aceh" (interview with author, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006). The third and dominant theme

in statements by GAM leaders was that it was an "insult" for Jakarta or Java to think they could teach Aceh how to respect Islamic law. The standard line here went as follows: the Acehnese had long implemented *shari'a* in their daily lives, had been Muslims longer than other Indonesians, and had introduced the religion to the rest of the archipelago. It was offensive for Jakarta to impose "its" version of *shari'a* on Aceh.

In some cases, especially among younger civilian activists, such attitudes were accompanied by a remarkable reworking of Aceh's history, which, while still emphasizing Islam, reimagined Aceh during the sultanate as having been cosmopolitan, open, and tolerant of diversity. In a dramatic reversal of the discourse of the 1950s, younger Acehnese activists (at least in many interviews I conducted between 1999 and 2003) often suggested that the Acehnese were not "fundamentalists" or "radical" like people "in Java." They would boast, for instance, that antigovernment activity had not been accompanied by attacks on religious minorities or their places of worship.

Often such criticisms implied a conceptualization of *shari'a* that differed from that being espoused by its official proponents, because it assumed that adherence was up to individual conscience rather than to be enforced by the state. GAM leaders or other Acehnese nationalists rarely highlighted this point or made it central, however. Their more common response was chagrin: they said it was precisely *because* Aceh was so Islamic that it did not need formal rules, especially rules designed by the government. As one GAM statement that combined most elements of the critique put it:

> The Indonesian authorities have announced their intention to enforce the so-called Islamic dress code in Acheh this month. Polri, the Indonesian police force, has already done so twice within the last six months. This enforcement appeared in the form of the police chasing un-jilbabed women in the street and gathering them in a field in order to give them lectures about decency. Now Polri is going to do it on a regular basis, in the name of implementing Syariah law in Acheh, and this with punishment. What hypocrisy! Here we have an avowed secular anti-Islam force that has been responsible for the death, rapes, and brutalization of thousands of women in Acheh for years now wanting to be their guardians of morality. ASNLF/GAM has always maintained that Achehnese do not need any outsiders to teach us about Islam or to implement any law, even the so-called syariah, to force us to adhere to our religion. Throughout its long history, there has never been an occasion that dressing becoming [sic] an issue in the Achehnese society. As far as ASNLF/GAM is concerned, although we agree that women and men dress modestly, we don't consider it is a matter for the State to dictate. We feel that the intention of the Indonesian authorities to impose this so-called Islamic dress code on Achehnese women is yet another desperate attempt to create discords among the population. . . . This is to show the world as though the Achehnese were such fanatic Muslims that Jakarta has to appease. [Central Bureau for Information 2002][7]

Such statements continued the long-standing identification of Aceh with Islam but shifted Islam *sideways*. In the 1950s, Islam was the central justification for revolt. Now it was merely an element of Aceh's national identity, albeit an important one. As Ayah Sofyan, the GAM spokesperson for the Aceh Rayeuk (Aceh Besar) territory, put it:

> The Aceh conflict cannot be resolved by Islamic *shari'a* offered by an outside party, because Islamic *shari'a* is already deeply rooted [literally: like blood and flesh] in the Acehnese nation. We have a perfect [*kaffah*] Islamic *shari'a*, while what the outsiders offer is only its skin. [*Serambi Indonesia*, February 14, 2002]

The core position being expressed here is identification of Islam with Acehnese cultural tradition. Ideologically speaking, this is the essence of the difference between GAM and Darul Islam: GAM identified Islam as a component of an immutable Acehnese culture and national identity rather than as the ideological foundation of GAM's struggle. The essence of the struggle was Aceh's national liberation.

There was a second way in which Islam remained functional in GAM's struggle: as a source of "spirit" and moral inspiration, as many GAM fighters and civil society activists put it. Tjut Kafrawi, former GAM military spokesperson in Peureulak (East Aceh), said that the first element their teachers stressed to all GAM fighters in their training was religion, so that they would know that "death was victory, because it meant victory in the afterlife." He gave the example of the *hikayat prang sabi*, the epic of the holy war against the Dutch, which he viewed as "a source of heroic inspiration." Almost all GAM fighters knew it and could recite it at least in part:

> We would sing at times when our thoughts were empty, to make it clear to ourselves what the direction of our struggle was. It was at those moments we would recite the *hikayat prang sabi*. For example, when we were at base camp, sometimes one could hear one of the soldiers softly singing the *hikayat prang sabi* to himself as he walked between the huts and the bathing place. It would make the hair on the back of your neck stand up. [Tjut Kafrawi, interview with author, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006]

In this and similar formulations, Islam is individuated; it motivates individual fighters but is not linked to any overarching political or social vision as it was in Darul Islam and in the earlier war against the Dutch.

In sum, Acehnese nationalism built on a substratum of religion. Islamic vocabulary provided nationalist discourse with much of its affective power, conferring a transcendent quality on the nation and on those who sacrificed themselves for it. But Islam was not central to GAM's political program. Instead it had become a source of individual moral motivation for those who fought in the nation's name, and a feature of the Acehnese identity they sought

to defend. There was, in short, a process of secularization of resistance. This secularization was remarkable because it happened in a society marked by high religious observance and where even the protagonists were devout and agreed that Islam was central to their identity. This shift from religious arguments was more than a tactical response to the government's policy of introducing *shari'a*, although that certainly accentuated it. It was a result of the adoption of the independence goal. Islamic references still infused the discourse of the movement and even reinforced arguments for independence, but they could not be the foundation of such arguments in majority-Muslim Indonesia.

Thus, when SIRA leader Muhammad Nazar wrote a response to Syarifuddin Tippe's warning that separatism risked breaking up the unity of the *umma*, he emphasized that no verses from the *Qur'an* or *Hadith* mandated "the union of states within territorial boundaries." He also said that Islam was celebratory of diversity, citing a *Qur'anic* verse that was a favorite of nationalists: "Indeed I have created you in tribes and nations so that you may know one another" (Nazar 2000b). In short, Nazar refuted Syarifuddin Tippe by stressing that the brotherhood enjoined by the *Qur'an* did not concern the territorial nation-state, but he did not portray Islam as providing any positive injunction regarding secession. Nazar's argument was instead essentially negative: Islam did not prohibit secession and it allowed diversity, but it prescribed neither. In short, he argued that Islam was indifferent to nationalism (see Aspinall 2007b for details).

Conclusion: From Islamism to Nationalism

The second half of the twentieth century saw a gradual but dramatic change in the politics of Islam and rebellion in Aceh. A rebel movement, the Darul Islam, which aimed to enforce *shari'a* and saw itself as part of an Indonesian Islamic state, evolved into a movement using secular arguments and ambiguous on *shari'a*. This chapter has suggested that several factors account for the change, including global politics, co-optation of the *ulama*, and democratization and Islamization of national politics. The most important factor, however, was the change in the ideological basis of the revolt, which occurred with the formation of GAM in 1976. From this time, the achievement of a separate, rather than an Islamic, state was the chief motif of Acehnese opposition. By necessity, the justification for the struggle became a claim of distinct Acehnese national identity and history. In the nationalist vision, Islam was relegated to being merely one aspect, albeit an important one, of Acehnese identity and a source of moral inspiration.

The downgrading of Islam was not logically necessary in the sense that the Acehnese *could* have emphasized that they were more, or differently, Islamic

than other Indonesians. Nevertheless, secularization in Aceh is part of a striking global pattern. In most places where, as in Aceh, nationalist movements among Muslim minorities have sought to break away from Muslim majority states, secular orientations predominate. Thus, in Turkish Kurdistan, the main guerilla group, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), draws mostly on Marxist and ethnonationalist ideas; in the Western Sahara, Polisario is "an essentially secular organisation" (Pazzanita 1994, 276). In contrast, in territories where Muslim minorities seek to break away from non-Muslim majorities, separatist movements can more readily seek foreign Islamist support by emphasizing Islamic goals and identity. Emphasizing Islam also sharpens rather than blurs the identity boundary between the secessionist minority and state it seeks to leave. As a result, the last two decades have seen strong trends in the direction of Islamization of minority Muslim separatist movements in many parts of the world, including in the Southeast Asian regions of Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines. The trend has been especially dramatic in Chechnya, where the brutalities of Russian counterinsurgency operations caused "the radicalization and Islamization of part of the separatist movement, with international Islamist organizations apparently gaining a foothold on Russian territory" (Wilhelmsen 2005, 35). In the 1990s, the Chechen struggle had been carried on in primarily a secular nationalist idiom, but in a striking contrast to Aceh, "From 2000, Islamists steadily framed the war as jihad by Mujahidin and martyrs (*shahids*) against 'infidels' (*kafirs*) and their Chechen 'traitors to the faith' (*munafiqs*)" (Hughes 2007, 106). In Kashmir, the process went even further. During the 1990s, in part under the influence of the nearby Afghanistan war, an earlier generation of secular Kashmiri nationalists was partly displaced by Kashmir and Pakistan-based *jihadis* who *rejected* altogether Kashmiri nationalism and the goal of an independent nation-state. Instead they aimed for union with Pakistan, either as an end in itself or as a mere stage in a global *jihad* to establish a universal caliphate (Sikand 2001).

In Aceh, the shift was decisively in the opposite direction—from the universal to the particular. As with the reverse movement in Chechnya, it was also a shift driven by *defeats*, but in this case by defeats experienced by Islamic forces. These defeats produced a localization and territorialization of identity that, once crystallized, implied a turning away from Islam, precisely because Islam was a force for unity with the rest of Indonesia. Even during Darul Islam, continued attachment to the idea of Indonesia was expressed as a commitment to *ukhuwah Islamiyah*. Indeed, one may argue that just as Aceh was historically integrated into Indonesia primarily through the medium of Islam, the religion remained the force with the greatest potential to bind Aceh to

Indonesia. Even during the Soeharto years, Islamic networks continued to be important for tying Acehnese society to the greater Indonesian community. The only nationwide voluntary organizations with significant popular support in Aceh were Islamic ones. In the post-Soeharto years it was precisely the people who sought to defeat separatism who emphasized Islamic brotherhood. Those who placed unity of the *umma* and its confrontation with unbelief above all else were at best indifferent to Acehnese nationalism. It is not surprising, therefore, that the spread of secessionist ideas was accompanied by a shift away from explicitly Islamic ideology, and that this shift accelerated markedly once national leaders belatedly recognized Islam's power to bind Aceh to Indonesia.

8

From War to Peace

Internationalization, Democratization, and the Domestication of Nationalism

As the sun set on August 15, 2006, I was in Banda Aceh with a crowd of several hundred people watching a ceremony to commemorate the signing of the Helsinki peace accord one year earlier. After speeches, prayers for peace, and an impressive Acehnese dance performance, the band struck up a familiar tune: the Indonesian nationalist song, *Padamu Negeri* (To You, My Country). The most senior dignitary there, Indonesian vice president Jusuf Kalla, walked forward, faced the crowd, and began to sing. Before long he beckoned the senior GAM leader present, the "prime minister," Malik Mahmud, to join him. Malik walked uncomfortably to the stage and linked arms with the vice president. His lips moved a little but the audience was too far away to know if any sound was coming out. Later he told me that he had not been singing. As a classic diasporan nationalist who had been born in Singapore, he did not even know the lyrics. Instead, he had been reciting a prayer.

For me and presumably for other observers, despite its awkwardness this scene symbolized the extraordinary shift that had occurred over the previous eighteen months. Here was the leader of a movement that previously had dedicated itself to attacking Indonesia and its symbols, if not celebrating those symbols, at least publicly acquiescing to them. This vignette prepares us for the task of this chapter. In previous chapters we have traced the emergence of an intransigent ethnonationalism in Aceh. This chapter tries to explain how GAM so suddenly and unexpectedly abandoned its goal of independence, and how peace came to Aceh.

In early 2005, during talks in Helsinki with the Indonesian government,

GAM's leaders in exile announced that they were willing to accept a resolution based on self-government for Aceh within Indonesia rather than complete independence, a concession that caused consternation and confusion among their supporters. A few months later, in August 2005, they signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which led to the disarming of their fighters and the passage of the Law on the Governing of Aceh, which would provide Aceh with greater autonomy but keep it within the Indonesian state.

GAM leaders enforced submission to the agreement among their followers. There was little internal dissension, and only a few malcontents in the diaspora opposed the settlement. Almost overnight Aceh went from being written off by commentators as having one of the world's most intractable internal conflicts to being celebrated as having experienced one of its most successful peace processes. By the end of 2006, GAM ideologue and strategist Irwandi Yusuf had been elected as Aceh's new governor and was visiting Jakarta, where he met with senior officials and proclaimed that GAM had put aside the goal of independence once and for all.

This book has primarily aimed to analyze the separatist conflict in Aceh. Space does not allow a full account of the peace process and of the reasons for its success. Several studies are already available (see Aspinall and Crouch 2003; Aspinall 2005; Schulze 2007; Morfit 2007; ICG 2005a, 2005b; Kingsbury 2006), and no doubt more will appear. The aim of this chapter is instead modest: to explain GAM's *volte-face* and interpret its significance in the context of the larger story of Acehnese nationalism told in this book.

Most accounts of the Aceh peace process emphasize one factor above all others: the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004. This freakishly destructive natural disaster began with a 9.0 magnitude earthquake on the ocean bed to the west of Aceh. Massive waves washed over coastal areas around the ocean's rim. Aceh was worst hit, with waves in some places traveling several kilometers inland. They wrecked much of the capital, Banda Aceh, as well as hundreds of coastal villages and towns. Upwards of 150,000 people died in Aceh alone, perhaps five times the death toll caused by three decades of war. For the first time, Aceh moved to the center of world attention. Governments and populations around the world donated billions of dollars for tsunami relief, and thousands of foreign aid workers moved into the territory, bringing journalists in their wake. Almost immediately, GAM leaders announced a ceasefire. Negotiations in Helsinki began soon after. Within a little over six months they had concluded the peace agreement. It is little wonder, then, that many journalists and commentators interpreted the peace deal as a response to the tsunami.

Analysts who have researched the negotiations more carefully note that the first faltering steps toward renewed talks had actually begun some time before the tsunami, so the disaster can hardly be the only explanation for their success. They emphasize other factors, chief among them the military setbacks that GAM had suffered prior to the tsunami (Aspinall 2005, 9–10; International Crisis Group 2005a), and on the government side, the willingness of the newly elected leaders, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice President Jusuf Kalla, to compromise as well to recognize that a military solution was impossible (Aspinall 2005, 14–16; Morfit 2007).

Peace studies literature suggests that an important condition for ending conflict is a "mutually hurting stalemate." Such a situation arises when "the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them" (Zartman 2001, 8). GAM's abandonment of the independence goal, in this perspective, appears more as a rational response to its military setbacks than as a moral reaction to the devastation caused by the tsunami. We shall see that there is much that is persuasive about this explanation. However, the story is also more complicated. Some of the ingredients that had helped GAM's growth as a nationalist insurgency also proved critical to its decision to abandon the independence goal.

The chapter makes three major arguments. The first argument concerns GAM's strategy of *internationalization*. As has been repeatedly emphasized in this book, Acehnese nationalism was from the start deeply enmeshed in a global context. In the post-Soeharto period, GAM leaders worked assiduously to interest international actors in their cause. For the first time they had some success, which caused great concern among government officials who believed that internationalization was a slippery slope down which Aceh would follow East Timor out of the Republic. In fact, it ended up domesticating GAM and blunting its nationalist message.

The second argument is that the rise of a new democratic movement and discourse in Aceh, discussed in Chapter 6, also set the scene for GAM's change of heart. As we have seen, the post-Soeharto democratization provided new opportunities for GAM to renew its insurgency and helped accelerate violent conflict. The same years, however, also saw an ideational shift in nationalist politics. Ethnonationalist discourse, which portrayed sovereignty as the nonnegotiable birthright of the Acehnese, was challenged by a civic nationalism that viewed it in human rights and democratic terms. GAM leaders took advantage of this shift during the negotiations of 2005, repackaging their demand as one for democracy for the Acehnese people. Much comparative literature sees democratization as inducing ethnic conflict. In the short term

it did have this effect in Aceh, but in the longer term Aceh also offers a more encouraging picture: democratization provided a conceptual and institutional framework for ethnic compromise and conflict amelioration.

Finally, the third argument is that the economic dimension was also important in consolidating GAM's change of heart. In the conflict years GAM funded itself by parasitizing the Indonesian state via shadow-economy links. After the peace, although democratic political mechanisms provided one way to integrate the movement into the Indonesian state, the patrimonial political economy provided another means. GAM commanders began to transform themselves into business entrepreneurs, and the movement took on the appearance of a patronage machine. At the grassroots level, it increasingly resembled a semi-criminal *preman* group of the sort found in other Indonesian provinces, using muscle, intimidation, connections, and political organization to secure access to economic resources for its supporters.

Internationalization and the Peace Process

If the rise of secessionist nationalism in Aceh from the 1970s can be understood only in an international context, the same goes for its transformation. Without Hasan di Tiro's travels through American Cold War networks in the 1950s and 1960s, and without him imbibing the newly minted doctrine of self-determination in New York, it is possible no Acehnese leader would have reconceptualized Aceh as a nation and formulated the independence goal in the way he did. Discontent with Jakarta no doubt would have continued back in Aceh, but most likely in its formerly Islamist and regionalist cast.

When Hasan di Tiro reimagined Aceh as an aspiring member of the nation-state system he also had to conceive of new strategies and new allies. Because membership in that system is conditional upon recognition by its other members, separatist movements are compelled to seek support from other nation-states. In the case of Aceh, this partly meant presenting Aceh internationally in ways that separatist leaders thought accorded with prevailing notions of self-determination. It also meant making straightforward appeals for international backing.

In GAM's early years there was a desperate and largely fruitless quest for foreign support, first from the West and then in the Islamic world. In his first letter as Aceh's new "head of state" to his mentor, retired U.S. intelligence czar Edward Lansdale, in April 1977, di Tiro noted that Aceh was "foremost among important strategically situated States of the world" and stressed that he would establish close relations between Aceh and the United States, "which is practically my second country." A year later he wrote to explain the frustrations he

was having in aligning his struggle with "the American frame of reference."[1] His old Cold War connections counted for little now, with Indonesia ruled by a pro-Western regime. The American officials who had once supported anticommunist havens in Sumatra and other islands had passed from the scene or were delighted by Soeharto's rule. In Washington, Lansdale himself was no longer influential and, in a letter to di Tiro, warned that "many in this [Carter] administration are newcomers, unknown to me and I want to be careful not to harm your cause as I proceed."[2] Lansdale tried to persuade di Tiro to leave Aceh, and when he conveyed the essence of di Tiro's demands (for taxes from Mobil and Bechtel) to the State Department, the response was curt: "In our view, Acheh is, as it has been since Indonesian independence, an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia" and "Mr. di Tiro's approach to this problem does not seem to be based upon a very clear understanding of American ways."[3]

Aceh Merdeka leaders next turned to the Middle East. As di Tiro explained to another American friend in 1985, "Having failed to get Western audience, I had to concentrate on the Islamic World and succeeding [sic]."[4] In fact, apart from Libya, no Islamic countries provided assistance. By the mid-1990s, although GAM could rely on a growing global diasporic network, it was still isolated from the main currents of world diplomacy.

It was only after Soeharto fell that this situation began to change. Renewed conflict in Aceh coincided with a period when important players in the international system were more willing to support conflict resolution and democratic transitions in developing countries. It was the end of the decade of interventionism that followed the Cold War, and although the initial optimism about a "new world order" had evaporated in the disasters of Somalia, Yugoslavia, and Rwanda, its residue still affected world affairs. "Democracy assistance" was also a growing part of the foreign aid provided by the United States and other rich countries, and from 1998 they began to pump millions of dollars into governance and civil society programs in Indonesia. Many foreign journalists also began to visit Aceh, and for the first time there was significant reporting of the conflict in the international media. Added to the mix was international concern from early 1999 that civil disturbances might derail Indonesia's transition and create a "failed state" (another buzz phrase of the times) or, especially after 2001, a haven of Islamic radicalism.

These circumstances produced greater willingness by major international NGOs, the United Nations and related bodies, and some foreign governments to explore opportunities for peacemaking in Aceh. In the vanguard were a few NGOs that, with less political constraints, began to fund the boldest of Aceh's civil society groups. UN agencies and foreign governments trod more

carefully because of Indonesian sensitivities about interference in its domestic affairs, which rose to fever pitch after the East Timor referendum in August 1999. Even so, embassy political officers and, eventually, ambassadors began to visit Aceh, while the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and similar bodies started funding local groups. After the liberal-minded Islamic leader Abdurrahman Wahid became Indonesia's president in October 1999 and said he wanted to negotiate a settlement, representatives of foreign governments, including the Americans, Europeans, and Japanese, sent out feelers to explore how they might support the process. Eventually, "resolving the Aceh conflict" became an agenda item in the international endeavor to remake Indonesia as a modern liberal democracy.

This environment, plus the renewed insurgency, provided GAM and other groups in Aceh new opportunities to grab world attention and sympathy. Abdullah Syafi'ie, Sofyan Dawood, and other guerilla commanders frequently invited journalists, including foreign ones, to their jungle bases. They became sophisticated at handling the media, smuggling conspicuous foreigners behind enemy lines, stage managing photogenic events, and ensuring that civilians were always on hand to tell stories of military brutality. They also made more urgent appeals for foreign intervention. From early 1999, almost every time GAM leaders addressed the media, they leavened their condemnations of Indonesian "colonialism" with calls for the UN or other international agencies to investigate and intervene. Student protestors flew the UN flag alongside the Acehnese one.

After Hasan di Tiro suffered a debilitating stroke in 1997, a second tier of leaders in exile (notably prime minister Malik Mahmud, foreign minister Zaini Abdullah, and GAM spokesperson Bakhtiar Abdullah) took the lead in the negotiations. Di Tiro's stroke and his consequent sidelining was probably itself an important factor in the eventual success of the negotiations; it is hard to imagine him acceding to the compromise that was eventually reached. These second-tier leaders began to have some modest success in their attempts to court world opinion after 1998. Journalists, researchers, and activists increasingly sought out their views while various international meetings provided them with forums to express them. GAM leaders said that international work of this sort would be key to their success. As GAM's armed forces commander Abdullah Syafi'ie put it, 80 percent of GAM's struggle was through political and diplomatic means; only 20 percent was with arms (*Kontras*, October 4–10, 2000).

There was no clear division between the movement's international and domestic strategy. Much of the international work was played out for the benefit of a local audience. From the start GAM leaders had tried to boost their own

authority by claiming diplomatic success and legitimacy in international law. They did so in a clumsy manner, parading an understanding of international affairs that seemed archaic and parochial. The fantastic rumors that circulated in the 1970s about Hasan di Tiro's foreign influence were an early instance of this, as were later routine claims by GAM speechmakers that dozens of countries supported Aceh's independence. In the post-Soeharto period, di Tiro's idiosyncratic interpretation of international law and the successor state principle justified rejecting compromise with Indonesia. As di Tiro put it, "There's no need for a dialog with a bunch of liars," because Aceh was "already a sovereign nation" (*Jakarta Post*, December 5, 1999). Likewise, as we have seen, GAM leaders initially rejected a referendum because, as successor to the sultanate, the state of Aceh had been independent since time immemorial. GAM's early engagements with what they saw as international norms thus produced inflexibility, not compromise.

GAM leaders could hold such attitudes when their claims of diplomatic success were fictional and when their understanding of international affairs was unencumbered by experiences of real diplomacy. As their attempts to engage the international community began to bear fruit and they came closer to achieving the international credibility they had previously craved, GAM leaders found their ideas under increasingly direct challenge from the very players to whom they looked for succor.

The breakthrough came in early 2000 when a newly formed Geneva-based NGO, the Henry Dunant Centre (HDC, named for the founder of the Red Cross, later renamed the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue) took advantage of the election of Abdurrahman Wahid as president to offer itself as mediator. The HDC defined its mission in terms of a "new prevention" philosophy of mediated negotiation in intrastate conflicts. Its staff had extensive experience in UN-organized humanitarian operations in other conflict zones. The HDC-led peace process notched up considerable successes and produced two ceasefires, one known as a Humanitarian Pause in 2000, another achieved under a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) in December 2002 (Aspinall and Crouch 2003; Huber 2004). Both ceasefires were intended to pave the way for negotiations on a political solution, but they failed because the positions of the two sides remained irreconcilable: GAM leaders were determined to secede; many on the government side rejected compromise with separatists. Army commanders worked especially hard to undermine the agreements and, when the second one broke down, were given free rein to pursue a military solution.

However, the HDC-mediated process did increase international involvement in Aceh's affairs. HDC established itself in Banda Aceh and its repre-

sentatives built a prominent local media profile. More important from GAM's perspective, major governments and international organizations took an active interest in the process. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised it, as did the U.S., Japanese, and various European Union (EU) governments. Some countries provided funds to support the HDC and the monitoring of the various agreements. When negotiations floundered after the failure of the Humanitarian Pause, ambassadors of the United States and several EU countries made well-publicized visits to Aceh, urging continued dialogue. The HDC formed a group of international "wise men"—retired dignitaries who included retired U.S. Marine General Anthony Zinni, who, to GAM at least, signaled semi-official endorsement of the process. On the eve of the CoHA, Japan, the United States, the European Union, and the World Bank cosponsored the Preparatory Meeting on Peace and Reconstruction in Aceh, which was attended by thirty-eight countries in Tokyo. Pledges were collected to support humanitarian programs, rehabilitation, and monitoring. During the CoHA there was an influx of foreign NGOs and aid groups into the territory, and forty-eight soldiers from Thailand and the Philippines came as peace monitors.

The process, therefore, meant that GAM leaders were for the first time acknowledged by major foreign powers. At last they had the international audience they had previously longed for. They met ambassadors and attended meetings in Geneva and Tokyo. Important people came to Stockholm to lobby them. Photographs of GAM leaders meeting Anthony Zinni and the other "wise men" now joined the collection of faded images and memorabilia that an increasingly infirm Hasan di Tiro showed to visitors to his Stockholm flat. In other words, GAM leaders used the peace process to further shore up their credibility in the eyes of their followers; here at last was evidence that the world took them seriously. So, for example, GAM spokesperson Ismail Syahputra told the press that although the first agreement was only humanitarian rather than political, it was only a first step in attaining recognition: "We have taken this matter to the international level. Our commitment to make Aceh independent remains and there will be no compromise. . . . This is our first step toward taking even greater steps" (*Republika*, May 12, 2000).

There is no doubt that, as Kirsten Schulze has emphasized, the attitude of GAM's leaders to this peace process was primarily strategic: "GAM saw the peace process as central to its strategy of internationalization and viewed internationalization as the only way to achieve independence" (Schulze 2004, 51). The overall goal was to replicate the East Timor model, by which growing international interest in the conflict eventually led to UN involvement and an internationally supervised act of self-determination. Toward that end

GAM's orientation was always to expand international involvement; it refused to talk without an international mediator, insisted that foreign troops monitor agreements, and strove to involve the UN directly (although the Indonesian government resisted this demand). GAM commanders also used negotiated lulls in the violence to rearm and consolidate their structures. In interviews, numerous former field commanders recalled that the Humanitarian Pause and CoHA were periods of exhilarating growth for the movement.

GAM leaders had difficulties, however, when they actually began to meet ambassadors and government representatives. It was their habit on such occasions to convey their standard beliefs about Aceh's past glories, the illegality of Indonesian sovereignty, the perfidy of the Dutch, and the artificiality of Indonesia, finishing with the need to restore Aceh's independence as successor to the sultanate. None of the diplomats were interested in such matters, nor could they respond positively to them. After one such meeting, a U.S. official dismissively told them that he and his government were interested not in such "old history" but rather in the current situation, under which U.S. recognition of Indonesian suzerainty over Aceh would not be reviewed (confidential communication with author, 2001). Despite all GAM's efforts, not a single foreign government backed its independence claim. Moreover, in part precisely because of the inflexibility of their views, GAM and other Acehnese never succeeded in building the sort of international solidarity network that had been so effective in pressuring foreign governments to take up the East Timor case (McCulloch 2005a). Activists in Western countries were often puzzled by GAM's anachronistic claims about sovereignty, and worried by its ethnocentrism. It also did not help that the Acehnese were Muslims and thus lacked the church networks and cultural affinities that helped the East Timorese to evoke sympathy in the West. To make matters worse, soon after GAM began to make headway in developing international links, the global political climate shifted dramatically in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, the ensuing declaration of the so-called "War on Terror" by the U.S. government and its allies, and their invasion of Iraq. These events created an international climate in which the early optimism of the post-Cold War era gave way to a renewed emphasis on security in international affairs in which major powers were markedly less sympathetic to armed groups of all kinds. GAM leaders in Stockholm were largely successful in distancing their movement from Islamist terrorism, but they were made aware of the fragility of their position when several of them were investigated by Swedish authorities in 2004 after the Indonesian government made representations to Sweden that they were responsible for acts of domestic terrorism in Indonesia.

International involvement thus had a price. GAM leaders did not abandon their long-cherished goals. Initially they still hoped that they could leverage the peace process to their own benefit and somehow attain independence through it. As it became obvious that no international backer would support such an outcome, and with the Indonesian government increasingly insistent that GAM would have to disavow independence for the process to continue, there was an increasing disconnect between GAM discourse and the logic of the peace process. Several times in the early 2000s I had the opportunity to meet senior GAM leaders in Stockholm and was repeatedly struck not by the lucidity or vehemence of their strategy of internationalization but by its incoherence. Even senior leaders were unable to explain how the process in which they were participating might one day lead to independence, although they still insisted that this was their unshakeable goal. But slowly and ineluctably the political ground began to shift beneath their feet. The first compromise came when in early 2002 they agreed to accept the 2001 Special Autonomy Law as a "starting point" for political discussions. They still tried to exploit the ambiguity of the process and insisted that they still wanted independence. Eventually, however, the contradiction did not hold. Just as international experiences had helped generate Acehnese nationalism in the first place, when its leaders finally engaged in real rather than imaginary diplomacy, they found they had to abandon their independence goal. Although internationalization was a central strategy of the movement, it eventually tamed it.

GAM's Switch

Tentative steps toward reviving the peace process preceded the December 2004 tsunami by some months. The tsunami was important, but so too was the preceding context of military and diplomatic failure. In May 2003 the military emergency had begun and army leaders had announced they were going to destroy GAM once and for all. Central to their strategy was intensification of army control over Aceh's villages, with the aim of isolating the insurgency from its rural base. Troops established posts in villages where previously there had been none. They interrogated and monitored villagers to identify GAM sympathizers and prevent them from sending supplies to the guerillas. Soldiers also forcibly emptied many villages, relocating their inhabitants in temporary camps where they were screened and indoctrinated. Civilian militias were established in most areas, and citizens were forced to join them, provide intelligence, participate in guard duty, and sometimes search for GAM fighters. There was much arbitrary and gross violence against civilians, as well as

a relentless propaganda campaign characterized by mass "loyalty parades" in which people were required to pledge allegiance to Indonesia. The political climate became very repressive, and many urban political activists fled to Jakarta or further afield, while many villagers ended up as refugees in Malaysia. Once the villages were secured, the army began to pursue GAM fighters in the surrounding countryside. Abandoning the hesitancy that had characterized much past TNI behavior, smaller and more mobile elite army units now often pursued the guerillas for weeks at a time, leading to what one former GAM commander described as endless games of "cat and mouse" deep in the jungle (Abu Tausi, interview with author, Calang, February 13, 2007).

During the year of the military emergency (and during the subsequent "civilian emergency" that began in May 2004), the army did not successfully eliminate GAM, or even reduce its armed strength to pre-1998 levels. However, it did have a significant impact. After the first year, Indonesia's armed forces chief claimed that the security forces had reduced the size of GAM by 9,593 (*Kompas*, June 10, 2005), a figure that presumably included surrenders, captures, and deaths and was doubtlessly exaggerated. (It was obvious that the TNI included civilian deaths in its GAM casualty list.) Even so, most observers agreed that the decline was substantial (International Crisis Group 2005; Schulze 2006; Aspinall 2005, 8–9). Few senior commanders were killed or captured. (One major loss came in September 2004 when Ishak Daud was shot dead.) Most former field commanders I interviewed put the loss of fighters in active GAM units in the vicinity of 10 to 20 percent (with many of that number being killed or captured when visiting family members in villages rather than during firefights). According to American journalist William Nessen, who spent several weeks with GAM guerillas at the outset of the emergency, fighters were unprepared for the onslaught: "I recall the shock among the men when we appeared to have lost a half-dozen fighters in a single encounter. They had never lost more than one or two men in a battle and usually went months without anyone even wounded." In the second year of the fighting, over one third of "his" company in North Aceh were killed, and company commanders "began dying in large numbers" throughout Aceh (personal communication with author, January 2007). The impact on GAM's civilian infrastructure was even more severe. As the TNI moved systematically through the villages, civilians who provided fighters with intelligence and supplies, family members of fighters, as well as other civilian supporters were killed or captured in great numbers.

Numerous former fighters I interviewed agreed that the year and a half following the declaration of the military emergency (and especially the "civilian

emergency" beginning in mid-2004) was a tough period. In most places they retreated deep into the hills and jungles and had difficulties securing logistics. Their fate, however, varied considerably from region to region. Things were especially bad in the Central Highlands. According to one commander there, had there been no peace agreement, "our struggle would have come to end. . . . How could we continue if we all died of hunger? And if we had no guerillas in the mountains—what would be the point of diplomacy?" (Husni Djalil, interview with author, Takengon, February 15, 2007). Elsewhere the situation was less dire. In Bireuen, for example, fighters also retreated to the mountains for two years. They ran out of rice after six months but survived eating game and other forest products. Their capacity to engage with the TNI in combat, however, was hampered because they were accompanied by many civilian refugees (interviews with author, Bireuen, February 20, 2007). In Pase, or North Aceh, fighters also withdrew into the mountains. Here there was "not a single day when our fighters did not eat rice," although they had difficulty attaining medicines and bullets, and some of those who were injured died of infection because they could not get proper medical treatment (Tgk Matang and Tgk Ibrahim KBS, interviews with author, Lhokseumawe, February 19, 2007). In the Aceh Besar area around the capital, Banda Aceh, the commander (from 2005; his predecessor died of illness during the military offensive) estimated that only about 10 percent of combatants were killed, although many more ordinary citizens fell victim (Tgk Muharram, interview with author, Banda Aceh, February 22, 2007).

Most GAM leaders, especially former field commanders, are adamant that the compromise GAM offered in the MoU was not a response to their military weakness. Most stressed that the movement was not facing extinction and that their privation and suffering had merely added to their warlike spirit: "So long as one Acehnese was alive to hold a rifle, we would keep fighting," as one former fighter in North Aceh put it to me. Irwandi Yusuf added another twist, arguing that by late 2006 the situation had begun to improve because those remaining in the field were the core fighters. The sick or wounded who had burdened them had mostly died or been captured; the villagers who had fled into the mountains and hampered their movements had also mostly returned home (interview with author, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006). Doubtless there is much retrospective bravado in such claims; however, when foreign journalists visited Aceh after the tsunami, they were able to visit intact GAM units, even close to Banda Aceh, whose members were apparently in good spirits.

Indirectly, however, the battlefield losses formed a crucial part of the background for why the movement so abruptly changed tack in early 2005. It is

true that GAM had experienced losses in the past. For long periods in the 1980s and 1990s only tiny numbers kept the movement's underground network alive. However, in 2003–2004 most of GAM's guerrillas were not battle-hardened veterans. Most were recruited from 1998–1999, when GAM was growing rapidly and hopes were high that Aceh would soon be independent. Now they were pushed into the hills, facing death or injury in military attacks, and often running short of supplies. Although most fighters remained highly committed, their situation was dispiriting. They and their leaders were now disabused of their earlier beliefs that either military victory or independence through negotiation would be possible. The leaders in Sweden in particular were bombarded with desperate and sometimes angry pleas for money and other assistance from field commanders. In the words of Malik Mahmud when explaining the movement's readiness to explore new approaches in Helsinki, "The existing strategies applied by both parties had caused a costly stalemate" (personal communication with author, October 18, 2005).

It was in this context that the movement's leaders tentatively agreed to renew peace negotiations in December 2004, a few days prior to the Indian Ocean tsunami. The moves leading to this agreement were convoluted, and GAM leaders had not been eager to resume talks (Morfit 2007). It thus seems unlikely that they would have agreed to a definitive peace settlement, at least as quickly as they did, without the tsunami. The disaster had an accelerating effect, however, not so much because of the moral pressure it exercised (although it would be ungenerous to say that it had no such impact) but because of the way it altered the international dynamics surrounding the conflict. It also provided both sides with a way to sell otherwise unpalatable compromises to their followers.

Under the military emergency in May 2003, the government had reacted to GAM's strategy of internationalization by closing the province to foreigners. It had required not only the former mediators and peace monitors to leave, but also NGO workers, journalists, and casual visitors. Once the extent of the tsunami's impact became clear, the government reopened Aceh to the outside world. Thousands of relief workers flooded in. U.S. and Singaporean military helicopters picked up survivors from isolated villages. Soldiers from dozens of other countries established emergency shelters and field hospitals. Almost overnight Aceh went from "North Korea into Woodstock" (as one journalist put it; Mietzner 2007, 22). For me, having visited Aceh at times of military tension, it was an almost surreal experience to see the formerly highly militarized streetscape transformed by all the aid trucks, foreign military vehicles, and shiny cars of foreign relief agencies. In their wake came hundreds of for-

eign journalists, many of them eager not only to monitor humanitarian assistance but also to investigate the conflict.

All of this attention dramatically transformed the situation in Aceh, which was now host to a massive corps of international humanitarian workers, in a way that GAM had previously only dreamed about. This huge relief effort prompted renewed international support for negotiations. Various world leaders publicly and privately urged both sides to achieve a settlement in order to provide a secure environment for the relief. The man chosen to be the new mediator, former president of Finland, Maarti Ahtisaari, brought a personal authority to the negotiations that had previously been lacking. Ahtisaari had access to high-level authorities and from early on it was agreed that the European Union would back the process and provide a stronger monitoring mechanism than in previous rounds. After a period of isolation and defeat, GAM had a renewed chance to internationalize the peace effort.

It is not possible to rehearse here in detail the negotiations in Helsinki between January and August 2005. The key turning point came at the second meeting, on February 21–23. On the eve of this meeting, Indonesian officials increased pressure on GAM, insisting that they would walk away from the talks and revert to military operations if GAM did not accept a solution that kept Aceh within the unitary state. Importantly, the mediator's position implicitly backed this position. President Ahtisaari adopted the formula "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" as the guiding principle of the talks. By insisting on a comprehensive settlement, he reversed the approach used by the HDC, which had tried to bridge the political gulf between the two sides by persuading them first to end hostilities, hoping this would build the trust needed for a negotiated solution. Ahtisaari was aware that his position reinforced the government's; as he later explained, "we were looking at a narrow opening in the autonomy clause as a basis of the negotiations. That was the general approach. We were not looking at other alternatives" (*Tempo*, August 23–29, 2005). Instead, "the whole exercise was to find out whether special autonomy, or self-government, as GAM called it during the talks, offered enough for GAM to give up their claim for independence" (personal communication with author, October 18, 2005).[5] Adding to the pressure, during these early rounds several foreign ambassadors met GAM negotiators in Finland and stressed that a negotiated solution should respect Indonesia's territorial integrity (Kingsbury 2006, 34).[6]

In the face of such pressure, GAM leaders were desperate. During the first round of talks, according to William Nessen, who was one of several informal advisors to the movement, GAM leaders realized they had finally

reached a "fork in the road": "Much of the discussion back in the hotel the first two nights was whether GAM was going to get 'trapped' by the negotiations. Zaini Abdullah, especially, felt that the talks might be a mistake, that the results would not be favorable to GAM and the Acehnese, especially given their weakened state" (personal communication with author, January 2007). Faced with a choice between collapse of the talks and abandoning the independence goal, they opted for the second position and announced they would accept a solution based on self-government of Aceh within Indonesia. As GAM spokesperson Bakhtiar Abdullah explained, "The conflict cannot be solved like that [that is, by continuing the demand for independence] and we have to come to terms with [the fact] that [self-government] is the main thing on the table. . . . Of course in the negotiations we go with the tangible things that are on the table" (*Reuters*, February 22, 2005). This dramatic change did *not* come after a long period of internal debate and reflection. Instead, in the words of Malik Mahmud, "the decision of adopting the 'self-government' option was taken during the course of the negotiation itself. . . . GAM decided that it was possible to accept a deal with GoI [Government of Indonesia] based on the 'self-government' formula precisely during late afternoon of the second day of the second round in the Helsinki Talks" (personal communication with author, October 18, 2005).

Previous studies, including my own (Aspinall 2005) have emphasized how the movement's weakened military position on the ground and the government's ultimatum combined to prompt this dramatic change of heart. In fact, the international dimension was equally important. The movement was now being offered much of what it had previously desired: praise and honor from foreign governments and international agencies, a prolonged international presence in Aceh, and international monitoring of the peace process. Thus, what motivated the change of position was not simply fear that the peace process would end, but also fear that the international community would abandon and stigmatize the movement. As Malik Mahmud put it, "We saw also the world kept silent about our move for independence, so we thought during that process that that was the best solution that was in front of us" (interview with author, Banda Aceh, February 9, 2007). The strategy of internationalization had subsumed the goal it had initially been intended to achieve.

Importantly, GAM leaders in Sweden also emphasized such international considerations in justifying their decision to their followers. The announcement that GAM was "putting aside" the independence goal shocked and confused many supporters. Those in the diaspora were most vocal in expressing their criticisms, with bitter debates occurring on the e-mail discussion lists

maintained by exiles. Back in Aceh, although many fighters accepted the decision with equanimity, others were confused, dismayed, and even angry. The leaders in Sweden had to work hard (using satellite telephones) to explain the decision to field commanders, who in turn explained it to the fighters. In describing how they succeeded in persuading the fighters to accept the peace deal, several former commanders I interviewed from different districts made the same two points. First, they emphasized the strict code of absolute loyalty to the leadership inculcated in GAM members, including the expectation that political matters would be left to the exiled civilian leadership. Second, they stressed the international dimension and that it was imperative for the movement to agree to peace in order to safeguard GAM's international reputation.

To take an example, Tengku Ilyas Pase, formerly an important military commander and propagandist in North Aceh, was both during and immediately after the negotiations political controller in Central and Southeast Aceh, where he was charged with explaining the peace process to GAM fighters and ensuring that they obeyed it. He recalled that most of them did not want to surrender their weapons and instead "said the agreement should be just a ceasefire, whereby the GAM and TNI would withdraw to separate posts. They worried if TNI broke the agreement, they would be destroyed." In convincing them, he explained that the agreement arose because of "international pressure" and that we "had almost become terrorists," meaning that GAM would have been accused of being terrorists internationally if they continued fighting amid the destruction of the tsunami. When they resisted, he asked them:

> Are you convinced you're able to do the political work of the Wali Nanggroe or the diplomats? If you run from your orders, if you run from us, should I appoint you to be the diplomats? If you don't think you can do it, then you should accept the orders from your superiors. [Interview with author, Lhokseumawe, February 18, 2007]

In explaining why they acceded, Tengku Ilyas stressed that GAM was "exactly like a military, whether you're talking of the civilian or the military wings. They follow orders exactly like a military does."

Former GAM leaders in Bireuen had a similar recollection. When the talks began, things were "quite normal" in Bireuen. Everyone wanted to continue fighting, as the following summary of my interview notes suggests:

> It was only when we got orders from the leaders outside Aceh that the tsunami was "God's diplomacy for the Acehnese to the international community" that we appreciated there would need to be a peace agreement. We agreed to accept it. Moreover, we heard from Sweden that the EU had guaranteed that Aceh would have democracy, although it would remain in the framework of Indonesia. If it really was going to be a democracy, then we would accept it. We had not been tired of fighting at that time. Indeed, at first everybody was very angry with the decision to accept Aceh

> being part of Indonesia. We telephoned the leaders and told them not to negotiate. All of the GAM leaders in Aceh were angry, because we were no longer talking about independence. But then the leaders explained that Aceh had been hit by the tsunami and that if we did not want peace, then the outside world would be angry with us. It would have been bad if we kept fighting when the international community wanted to come to Aceh and help. [Author's notes from interview with Tgk Husaini M Amin and Tgk Nashiruddin AR, Bireuen, August 20, 2006]

Decades earlier, GAM leaders had made their first halting efforts at international engagement. These had provided them with a vocabulary to imagine Aceh joining the system of nation-states, and with the authority and prestige to press their claims to a domestic audience. Their more successful attempts after the fall of Soeharto, combined with the threat that they would lose what little recognition they had received, had the unexpected result of domesticating them. Now GAM commanders used their claims of international success and understanding not to justify the independence goal but to explain why they had abandoned it.

Democracy and the Containment of Nationalism

Having looked at factors that motivated GAM's change of heart, we now turn to the progress of the peace process in its first three years. The discussion here emphasizes how democratic mechanisms and discourse helped to facilitate GAM's integration into the broader Indonesian political system. We also look at how GAM reformulated its aims after abandoning the independence goal.

The compromise embodied in the Helsinki accord was more comprehensive than in previous agreements. It included provisions for amnesty, demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of GAM fighters into society; robust mechanisms for international monitoring and enforcement of the peace (with the Aceh Monitoring Mission established jointly by the EU and ASEAN); and compensation for "all civilians who have suffered a demonstrable loss due to the conflict." It regulated key issues that previous negotiations had not touched; for example, it limited the number of "organic" military troops (troops that are part of the military's regular territorial command structure) in Aceh to 14,700.

At the heart of the agreement was a framework for decentralized government that Indonesian officials tended to refer to as "broadest possible autonomy" (*otonomi seluas-luasnya*—a phrase that had been used in connection with Aceh since the 1950s), and GAM leaders described as "self-government." In fact, in most regards the autonomy package embodied in the MoU did not differ much from what was already in the 2001 Special Autonomy Law. Many of the provisions recognizing Acehnese symbols resembled those in the ear-

lier law, and the allocation of natural resource revenues was little changed. In some respects, the autonomy offered was stronger; for instance, the agreement attempted to restrict the national legislature's authority over Aceh by stating that its "decisions with regard to Aceh . . . will be taken in consultation with and with the consent of the legislature of Aceh."

In one crucial respect, however, the arrangements envisaged by the Helsinki MoU differed greatly from those previously in force. In a section entitled "Political Participation," the agreement called for elections in Aceh and implied that independent candidates would be allowed to run for executive office—the positions of governor, district heads (*bupati*), and mayors and their deputies. It also provided that local political parties could compete for legislative seats. Elsewhere in the country, national legislation meant that only parties with a nationwide reach could run, and candidates for executive office had to be nominated by political parties or coalitions of parties. Overturning these provisions in Aceh was crucial for the success of the talks, and they almost broke down on the local party issue (Aspinall 2005, 37–42). Without such a provision, GAM members would have been able to compete for power in Aceh only by joining national parties, a prospect they rejected.

The first year after the signing of the agreement was a period of dramatic transition. GAM fighters came down from the hills and gave up their arms. This process went smoothly, and there were few serious violent incidents or violations of the accord. In July 2006 Indonesia's national parliament passed the Law for the Government of Aceh (LoGA), which was intended to embody the key elements of the Helsinki MoU and replace the Special Autonomy Law. Elements in the parliament and national bureaucracy who had opposed negotiating with GAM from the start watered down some provisions. For instance, the law did not require national legislation affecting Aceh to be approved by the Acehnese legislature and instead stated that the national government could overrule local regulations that conflicted with the public interest or with national laws and regulations (article 235(2)). GAM, SIRA activists, and other Acehnese criticized the new law, saying it deviated in important respects from the Helsinki MoU.

Despite their disappointment, GAM leaders did not abandon the peace process. A return to armed conflict was no longer realistic because the movement's followers had already been demobilized and disarmed. Equally important, the leaders were preoccupied with preparations for the elections of a governor and district heads, scheduled for December 2006. At this point, a split opened up between two groups in GAM. On the one hand were the key older Sweden-based leaders, including Prime Minister Malik Mahmud and

Foreign Minister Zaini Abdullah, and their allies, many of whom were 1976 generation leaders of the movement (such as Zakaria Saman and Muhammad Usman Lampoh Awe) and from Pidie. Some of them, such as Zakaria and Lampoh Awe, were relatives of Hasan di Tiro. This group backed Zaini's brother, Hasbi Abdullah, to run as deputy to widely respected academic Humam Hamid, who had been nominated by PPP. They were partly motivated by familial and personal considerations and the old hereditary principle that had been so strong in Aceh Merdeka's early years, and partly by their belief that it was premature for GAM to compete directly for the governorship.

On the other side of the split were most field commanders and many younger leaders. Part of the reason they gave for competing separately was that they rejected running alongside a candidate from a "national party," especially one who had once declared GAM to be *bughat*.[7] Following bitter and complex internal machinations, the military leaders of the movement (now organized in a body called the Komite Peralihan Aceh [KPA], or Aceh Transitional Committee) asserted their independence and endorsed Irwandi Yusuf as the candidate for governor and Muhammad Nazar as his running mate. Irwandi, a U.S.-trained veterinary scientist had previously been a military strategist and propagandist for the movement, and had gained a high public profile as its representative to the Aceh Monitoring Mission. Nazar was the head of SIRA and, in 1999–2000, had earned a public reputation for his fiery speeches denouncing Indonesian "colonialism" and "tyranny." In most urban municipalities and districts (except Pidie and, in a more ambiguous way, East Aceh), candidates for *bupati* were aligned with the Irwandi-Nazar team.

The election results surprised most observers because of the magnitude of the victory for candidates with GAM backgrounds. Irwandi Yusuf and Muhammad Nazar won 38 percent of the vote, easily surpassing the threshold of 25 percent required to win in the first round. The Humam Hamid—Hasbi Abdullah ticket was second, with 17 percent, meaning that (once another ticket that had weaker GAM links was added) 63 percent of voters supported candidates linked to the former nationalist movement. GAM candidates also did surprisingly well in the districts, securing victories in nine out of twenty-two districts and municipalities (this count includes two later elections, in Bireuen and South Aceh, in 2007). Unsurprisingly, the biggest GAM victories were in rural districts where ethnic Acehnese were dominant and where the insurgency had previously been strongest (the highest first-round margin of victory was 67 percent for Tgk Ilyas Hamid [Ilyas Pase] in North Aceh).

The magnitude of these victories resulted partly from the popular support the insurgency had previously enjoyed. GAM and SIRA candidates were

seen as standing for the sense of heightened Acehnese identity and grievance inherited from the independence movement. In one election campaign rally I witnessed (in Bireuen in June 2007), speakers emphasized people's suffering and sacrifices during the conflict and denigrated their opponents for remaining silent then. However, the logic of electoral competition in the new context also required them to modify their appeal. First, and most obvious, GAM leaders and their allies wanted to safeguard the peace process and avoided openly denigrating Indonesian national symbols or antagonizing national authorities by focusing on sensitive issues such as past human rights abuses. A mood of sacrificing sectoral interests to the greater good had taken hold, and all candidates promoted themselves as the best placed to preserve the peace.

Second, because former GAM candidates were running to take control of local government, they had to offer tangible benefits to voters and persuade them that they had the administrative skills and capacity to deliver. They did this by emphasizing three things above all in campaign propaganda: economic development, improved welfare, and eradication of corruption.[8] These themes resonated with many voters, who had suffered greatly due to the physical destruction and economic stagnation of the war years. GAM candidates especially stressed that they would dramatically transform village life. As Ramli, the winning GAM candidate for *bupati* in West Aceh, put it, "If I am elected we will emphasize development of the villages first, from the grassroots first. Because the roots of rebellion from the past were always in the villages" (interview with author, Meulaboh, 12 February 12, 2007). GAM candidates were also able to capitalize on the widespread popular disillusionment with corruption in the local administration.

To some degree, GAM speechmakers simply adapted the millenarian message they had used eight years earlier to campaign for independence, promising an instant and dramatic transformation of ordinary people's circumstances if they won the opportunity to govern.[9] Overall, however, the prospect of holding power prompted a shift from identity to governance themes in the movement's public discourse. Without ever having had a sophisticated social or economic program of their own, former GAM leaders simply borrowed wholesale from the international development agencies that now clustered around the peace process and Indonesia's democratization effort more generally, and promised to clean up government administration, introduce transparency and effectiveness in government service delivery, and attract foreign investment. This transformation accelerated after GAM leaders took office and began to busy themselves with running government. Individuals who several years earlier had been urging their followers to sacrifice their lives for

the sake of ancestral duty now began to learn about budgets, discuss auditing methods, create corruption eradication teams, and draft regulations on investment. Irwandi Yusuf maintained a populist image by making spot inspections at schools and public offices to ensure that staff were present and working hard. He also drove his own car rather than the chauffeur-driven luxury vehicle favored by previous governors. GAM strategists began to worry about a dramatic drop in voter support for them in the 2009 elections if they failed to deliver tangible improvements to ordinary people. Just as the fall of Soeharto had prompted a rapid identity shift, with many people in Aceh abandoning their former identification with Indonesia, the peace process had a similarly dramatic effect. It prompted not *abandonment* of Acehnese identity but rather its sudden *reduction in political salience*, at least temporarily.

These election themes were part of a broader reworking of goals by nationalist leaders. During a series of interviews in 2006 and 2007, former GAM leaders and combatants frequently emphasized that the peace agreement had required them to rethink first principles. They said that GAM had to focus on the benefits to the Acehnese that the movement had wanted to achieve by independence and instead try to achieve them by other means.[10] For example, in trying to calm distressed former combatants who did not want to witness the destruction of their weapons, Sayed Mustafa said he emphasized to them that "we have to hold to our ideals. What we had aimed at in struggling for independence was the prosperity of the people; that is still our ideal" (interview with author, Jeuram, February 12, 2007). Sometimes, this move involved reformulating the very meaning of the word *merdeka* (freedom, independence). For instance, Husni Djalil, a GAM leader in the Aceh Highlands area of Linge, looked forward to the time when a new GAM party would win a majority in provincial legislative elections: "We think that if Aceh Merdeka people lead Aceh, that means we will be *merdeka*, not politically, not as a state, but the community will be *merdeka*" (interview with author, Takengon, February 15, 2007). For instance, he explained, the new government would be able to provide free education and health services to the population.

One theme that arose frequently in such conversations was democracy, which GAM members now identified as one of their main goals. It might be said that GAM succeeded in reinventing itself through the peace process as a democratic rather than a nationalist movement. Take for example the following extract from the comments made by Malik Mahmud at the signing of the Helsinki MoU:

> There has been no peace in Acheh because there has been no justice in Acheh. What we hope we have achieved with the signing of this peace agreement is the beginning

> of a process that will bring justice to the people of Acheh. Justice means ensuring that the people have a voice and that they are listened to and their wishes are followed. This means the creation of a political system that encourages freedom of speech, many opinions, and the ability to fully participate in and be represented by that process. That is, ladies and gentlemen, the only way to ensure peace in Acheh is through the implementation of a genuine democracy. [State of Acheh 2005]

This was a dramatic reformulation of GAM goals. GAM's struggle had not been primarily about democratizing the state or providing freedoms to Aceh's population. It had instead been first and foremost about where the boundaries of the political community lay. Hasan di Tiro's vision of independence as the inalienable birthright of the Acehnese people had not depended on those people's consent or even their clearly expressed views. On the contrary, di Tiro had seen his main task as *transforming* Acehnese political consciousness, not acceding to it. When the authoritarian Soeharto regime collapsed, GAM leaders did not try to make common cause with Indonesia's democrats and reform the state; instead they intensified their efforts to end the state's authority over Aceh.

The new emphasis on democracy followed partly from the logic of the peace process. Even from the brief summary presented earlier it is obvious that new democratic mechanisms were important in the process. Once GAM leaders relinquished the goal of independence, they had to be offered a face-saving mechanism to integrate them into mainstream politics, but they also wanted an opportunity to gain political power. Although the Helsinki MoU was thus packaged as an offer of democracy to the people of Aceh, it was always understood that it was at core about offering GAM a way to compete for office. This was why allowing local political parties became the key deal breaker.

There was more to this transformation, however, than opportunistic disguise of a political backdown. In a fundamental way Indonesia's democratic transformation had provided a way for Acehnese nationalists to reconcile themselves with Indonesia in a manner that had been impossible in the centralized and authoritarian Soeharto regime. Nationalists effected this reconciliation by switching the old emphasis on *historical sovereignty*, in which independence was seen as a nonnegotiable birthright of the Acehnese, to an emphasis on *popular sovereignty*, which could be measured and assessed by democratic mechanisms. Making elections the centerpiece of the deal thus allowed them to accept a solution whereby Aceh remained part of Indonesia while claiming that they remained bound by their commitment to the Acehnese nation.

This shift was not a *direct* response to Indonesia's democratic transformation. Immediately after the collapse of the Soeharto regime, GAM leaders were never interested in the democratic reforms and decentralization taking place in Indonesia, or convinced that they were genuine. Instead they

saw these changes as a moment of weakness that they could exploit. GAM was greatly influenced, however, by the new student-led Acehnese nationalist movement in the post-Soeharto era, and the accompanying infusion into nationalist discourse of human rights and democratic themes (see Chapter 6). In a statement distributed on a diaspora e-mail network in early 2005, GAM spokesperson Bakhtiar Abdullah explained the offer of self-government by referring to the earlier "compromise" the movement had made by accepting the campaign promoted by students:

> From initially firmly demanding the absolute return of the sovereignty of the State of Acheh, [GAM] shifted fundamentally to accepting a referendum which would risk that sovereignty for the sake of giving way to the principle of democracy. Accepting a referendum meant accepting that sovereignty would fall to Indonesia in a legal manner and for eternity, supposing that the Achehnese nation had chosen to remain in Indonesia in a just, peaceful, and democratic referendum. It turned out that Indonesia did not have the bravery to accept that offer of democracy even as it proclaimed to the world that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia was a state which practiced the principle of democracy.

Bakhtiar was here claiming that GAM had been more flexible than the Indonesian government and made greater sacrifices. His comments remind us that it had been government intransigence on independence, and GAM's inability to press home its military campaign, that had provided the context for the movement's historic compromise in early 2005. But they also reveal the ideological rethinking that facilitated this change of course. Once Acehnese sovereignty was reimagined as an embodiment of the will of the people, expressed through democratic mechanisms rather than as an inheritance bequeathed from earlier generations, it took only one further step to accept a democratic resolution within the Indonesian state. In this way, democracy allowed for the successful reintegration of Acehnese identity and Indonesia.

Out of the Shadows

If internationalization and democratization provided the spur and the steed for GAM's reinvention, then money provided the fuel. As we have seen, during the conflict years GAM was both national liberation movement and money-making machine. Fighters raised funds from the diaspora and village communities, and from trade and business. In particular, GAM parasitized economic activity linked to the state and became part of a patrimonial shadow economy. A layer of people grew around the movement who had links with the criminal underworld and knew how to extort money from businesses and strike shady deals with local entrepreneurs and bureaucrats. GAM's reintegration

into society after the peace process was partly made possible by a reactivation of these links, and by deepening the movement's connection to the broader patrimonial Indonesian political economy.

Some early attempts by leading government officials to reinitiate negotiations with GAM prior to the tsunami were apparently made via shadow economy links. One of the earliest meetings, in Amsterdam in October 2003, involved Sayed Mustafa, the west coast GAM operative who had previously acted as intermediary between the movement and governor-elect Abdullah Puteh (Sayed Mustafa, interview with author, Jeuram, February 12, 2007). Others involved Malaysia-based Acehnese businessmen and were centered, on the government side, on offers of farming land and other economic compensation to GAM fighters (Patria, Suud, and Meuko 2005; International Crisis Group 2005). There were also rumors in the GAM camp about attempts to bribe GAM commanders with money and positions, an approach that reflected the dominant culture of money politics that pervaded Indonesia's post-Soeharto ruling elite. One indication of this culture was that Aceh's disgraced former governor, Abdullah Puteh, became involved in the negotiations. Puteh was widely viewed in Aceh as being a master at lubricating political deals with cash and was already in jail at the time, serving a sentence for corruption. Describing these early attempts at negotiations, he explained that it was necessary to offer "the right bride price" (*mahar yang pas*) to persuade GAM to lay down its arms.[11]

During the Helsinki negotiations themselves, although many rumors circulated about attempts by government negotiators to bribe their GAM counterparts, economic considerations mainly played a role to push what is known in peace process parlance as the DDR or Demobilization, Demilitarization, and Reintegration agenda. Both sides, as well as the mediator, knew that peace would mean that thousands of GAM fighters would be demobilized and that most of them had few skills, capital, or employment prospects. Having endured hardship during the conflict years, they now wanted to live normal, even prosperous lives. If their needs were not accommodated, they could act as spoilers, either by engaging in criminal behavior or by forming a reserve of disgruntled former fighters ready once more to take up arms. The Helsinki MoU (point 3.2.5.a) therefore provided that "all former combatants will receive an allocation of suitable farming land, employment, or in the case of incapacity to work, adequate social security from the authorities of Aceh."

Once the MoU began to be implemented, GAM began to reinvent itself, not simply as a peaceful political movement, but also as a patronage machine. Part of this process involved the distribution of more than $150 million in

reintegration funds provided by the government. There were many problems with the distribution of these funds, largely because the government provided only enough for 3,000 former fighters while the real number was much higher than that (the figure of 3,000 was written into the peace deal when GAM negotiators were trying to minimize the number of weapons they would have to surrender). After complex bargaining between the government and KPA, the organization of former GAM fighters, in many places KPA commanders became distributors of funds, with the idea being that they would share money among former combatants and other supporters. As a result, there were many conflicts in the KPA about who got money and who did not. In some places, these arguments became severe and fuelled violence between former combatants (Palmer 2007). As one disgruntled former fighter put it to me in Bireuen, he had preferred it when they were fighting in the forest, because things had been clear then: "Now, enemies become friends and friends become enemies" (confidential interview, June 15, 2007).

But official reintegration funds were only part of the story. Many GAM commanders, schooled in unorthodox fundraising methods, had grander ambitions, if not for their own sakes, at least in order to look after their followers. Moreover, the peace process coincided with a period of economic boom in Aceh; regular local government budgets were being swelled by special autonomy funds while huge sums were available for post-tsunami reconstruction. Former GAM leaders became adept at accessing these funds. In virtually every region, they established companies and cooperatives and transformed themselves into contractors. Mostly they were active in the construction industry: building houses, public offices, roads, bridges, irrigation channels, and other infrastructure, and supplying sand, rocks, and other building materials. In Aceh, as in the rest of Indonesia, the construction industry is one of the most politicized sectors of the economy. Contractors need ties with bureaucrats and politicians to win government contracts (by far the largest source of construction work) and kickbacks are expected when contracts are divvied up.

Former GAM commanders began to win contracts precisely because of their new political importance. Even before the December 2006 election victory, some *bupati*, mayors, and other local officials directed business opportunities to GAM commanders in their regions, often with the hope of securing their political support. Long-established contractors, also sensing which way the wind was blowing, began to make deals and work together with outfits run by the former guerillas. Some former GAM commanders, such as Darwis Djeunib in Batee Iliek (Bireuen) and Tengku Muharram in Aceh Besar, rap-

idly achieved success in the contracting industry. The important GAM commander from Pase, Sofyan Dawood, was said to have interests in many sectors of the economy; and Muzakkir Manaf, the former supreme commander of GAM's armed forces, became executive director of a company called Pulo Gadeng with diverse interests. Evidence of the business success of such former commanders was everywhere: in the new houses they built, the expensive sports utility vehicles and new motorcycles they drove, and the flashy clothes worn by their guards and assistants.

Muscle and intimidation remained part of this story. During field trips in Aceh in 2006 and 2007, I heard many stories of local KPA leaders and their followers exerting pressure in the scramble for contracts, employment, and money. Sometimes former fighters turned up at the offices of officials in charge of allocating funds and showed them bullets in order to win contracts. Anonymous telephone calls or text messages conveyed threats to burn down offices if a contract was not awarded "correctly." Other messages were only marginally more subtle, such as when local commanders warned international NGO officials that they would not be able to guarantee the security of their programs unless construction and security jobs were filled by GAM men and materials sourced from GAM ranks. Aceh was rife with low-level intimidation and harassment of this sort, and in some cases it led to violence. There was also an upswing in armed robbery, especially along the east coast, with some former combatants (sometimes those shut out of the official reintegration process) responsible for at least some of it. Irwandi Yusuf and GAM *bupati* and mayors feared that thuggishness and corruption among their supporters would undermine the movement's long-term political prospects and threaten the good governance agenda with which they wanted to win over foreign donors and investors. Several times they ordered their followers to stop levying *pajak nanggroe* on businesses and NGOs (*Analisa*, April 13, 2006; *Serambi Indonesia*, March 8, 2007, March 17, 2007).

But even though people talked quietly about the rise of political *premanisme*, or gangsterism, in Aceh, it is worth putting this development in its wider Indonesian context. *Premanisme* was an Indonesia-wide, publicly visible phenomenon in the post-Soeharto period. One prominent Acehnese businessman told me that extortion was much worse in Medan, the capital of neighboring North Sumatra, where *preman*-run youth groups ran a proliferation of violent protection rackets. As he put it, "In North Sumatra, if you're running a prawn farm and you refuse to pay, they'll tip poison in your pond. As bad as things are in Aceh, they were never that bad, even during the conflict years" (confidential interview with author, February 23, 2007). In sum, it is worth

stressing the normalcy, in the Indonesian context, of the processes described in this section. Former GAM fighters were being reintegrated into the political economy by way of shadow economy networks that were fundamental to Indonesia's post-Soeharto social order.

Conclusion: Nationalism Transformed

Three core ingredients contributed to GAM's change of heart concerning independence: military setbacks, effects of the internationalization strategy, and democratic transformation of the movement's ideology. A fourth factor, the December 2004 tsunami, was an accelerant to the peace process, promising increased international involvement and helping GAM leaders to sell their compromise to their followers, although it does not explain the underlying dynamic. Together these factors produced an outcome whereby GAM, and allied groups such as SIRA, abandoned their long-cherished goal of independence.

If we narrowly apply Ernest Gellner's well-known definition that nationalism primarily holds that political and national boundaries should coincide, then the Helsinki agreement saw the end of GAM as a nationalist movement. It was forced to abandon its previous commitment to full territorial sovereignty and accept that the Acehnese would be just one among many ethnic groups in the Indonesian nation, albeit one with special rights to govern themselves.

The shift was a difficult one. In describing the peace deal, GAM supporters used phrases such as "the worst of choices" (Tjut Kafrawi, interview with author, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006) or "retreating a step in order to advance four steps" (Husni Djalil, interview with author, Takengon, February 15, 2007). They harbored no illusion that self-government was not a defeat, although they saw it as the optimal outcome under the circumstances. In explaining their choice they used a language of strategic calculation, giving credence to those analyses that see secessionist movements as rising and falling on the basis of rational calculations made by leaders about likely success amidst changing national and international circumstances.

This does not mean, however, that GAM leaders and their allies abandoned the emotional attachment to Acehnese identity. On the contrary, because their decision was forced upon them, their underlying ethnic vision remained largely unchanged. For example, in the December 2006 elections, although former GAM leaders carefully avoided condemning Indonesia, they also made it clear that their loyalty was with Aceh and its history. GAM-sponsored candidates distinguished themselves from others by wearing traditional Acehnese formal dress for the photographs on the ballot paper. After wining the

governorship, Irwandi Yusuf insisted that it was permissible for him and his followers to display the old GAM flag, despite strong objections from central government officials. Amid their preoccupation with governance and welfare, GAM leaders also spoke of future policies to entrench public commitment to Acehnese identity—for example, more Acehnese language and history in local school curricula. They spoke of "double-flagging" public offices, with the Indonesian flag to be flown only on Indonesian national holidays and the flag of Aceh to fly on all other days (Malik Mahmud, interview with author, Banda Aceh, February 9, 2007). More fundamentally, they still talked of the Acehnese as a distinct *bangsa*, or nation, and did not embrace or even show much interest in Indonesian national symbols (except when they had little choice, such as in the scene described at the start of this chapter).

The distinction between a nationalist movement aiming at self-determination and independence and an ethnic movement seeking greater autonomy and recognition inside a larger nation-state is not clear cut. The world is full of examples in which the boundary between the two categories is blurred. In some cases, accommodationist ethnic movements give rise to more radical nationalist ones that supersede, compete with, or collaborate with the older movements, and in turn exhaust themselves making way, in cyclical patterns, for renewed moderation. Thus, in Indian Punjab, the Akali Dal party became both increasingly factionalized and radical when it competed with the militants of the Khalistani movement in the 1980s, but reemerged as the dominant and more moderate voice of ethnic Sikh political consciousness in the mid-1990s (Chima 2002, 32). In Sri Lanka, the moderate Tamil forces of the early postcolonial era, such as the Federal Party, in the 1970s and 1980s were overtaken by groups appealing to radicalized youths, with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) eventually becoming dominant; later, in peace talks in 2002, the LTTE itself made ambiguous statements about accepting a solution in a federal Sri Lanka before violence once more resumed. In Canada, Québécois nationalists campaign for sovereignty, but they also participate in both provincial and federal political institutions.

The Acehnese nationalist rapprochement with Indonesia is as ambiguous as these other cases. GAM leaders and their allies were genuinely committed to the peace deal and did not harbor secret plans to demand independence again in the near future. But in other respects their ethnic discourse and commitment was largely unchanged; and of course the future reemergence of a separatist movement cannot be ruled out.

9

Conclusion

One challenge in the study of nationalist conflicts like the one that occurred in Aceh between 1976 and 2005 is to steer through the shoals of determinism. Danger arises because in a world where the nation-state is naturalized there is a tendency to view existing nation-states as products of historical inevitability. Nationalists themselves usually depict their own nations as having deep historical or cultural roots while historians and political scientists are good at explaining how nationalist consciousness comes into being and why some groups of people succeed in forming independent nation-states. The other side of this tendency, however, is to dismiss the many nationalist "dogs which do not bark"—those places where, had circumstances been a little different, national consciousness might have developed and they might have become independent nation-states (Gellner 1983, 43).

This book has looked at a nationalist movement that "barked" very loudly but ultimately failed to achieve its goal of independence. Not surprisingly, assessments of Aceh's past have tended to follow closely the rhythms of politics in the territory. Before Acehnese nationalism emerged in the 1970s, scholars used to depict Aceh's history, especially the war against the Dutch, as part of a grand narrative of Indonesian national development.[1] In the post-Soeharto years, when Aceh's secession seemed a real possibility, historians and others looked back to the past for deep sources of Acehnese difference (see especially Reid 2004 and contributions in Reid 2006). Acehnese nationalists of course went much further and claimed that their movement was the reawakening of a slumbering consciousness and the restoration of a precolonial state.

Now that peace has come to Aceh and separatist nationalism has lost its force (at least for now), we need to avoid carefully the temptation to be wise after the fact and dismiss Acehnese nationalism as having been weak or superficial. Some Indonesian government officials betray something of this sensibility in their enthusiastic embrace and welcoming of former rebels back into the national fold, and in their conviction that past injustices have now been rectified. Indonesia can, in the words of vice president Jusuf Kalla, simply "close this long page in history" (*Serambi Indonesia*, November 10, 2005).

This book has tried to avoid determinism. It has stressed the contingency of Acehnese nationalism, and the conscious political effort that went into conceiving and popularizing it. Acehnese nationalism was not a reawakening of a premodern identity but a new form of thinking about belonging and statehood that exhilarated many of its early adherents precisely because of its innovation. But emphasizing contingency and agency does not mean that Aceh's nationalist movement somehow lacked legitimacy when compared to other nationalisms, or was weak or superficial. On the contrary, during the period covered by this study, the ideal of an independent Acehnese state was very powerful, and it motivated both great sacrifice and violence. Nationalism was more forceful and mass-based in Aceh than in many places that in recent times went on to claim a seat at the United Nations (think, for example, of many of the states formed out of the collapse of the former Soviet Union).

If it was not the product of historical inevitability, how did Acehnese nationalism, and the armed movement that propagated it, come into being and gain such force? This book has argued that it arose from a four-part dynamic.

First, the book has emphasized a *path-dependent* dynamic. A particular sequence of events around the time of Indonesia's independence created circumstances that were propitious for the later development of nationalism. The Acehnese achieved great authority over their own affairs in 1945–1949, but lost much of it almost immediately afterward, a loss that triggered rebellious discontent. The series of defeats for Aceh's Islamic leaders, especially the failure of Darul Islam and its plans to remake Indonesia on an Islamic foundation, narrowed their horizons on what could be achieved in Aceh alone. In other words, these defeats laid the groundwork for localization and territorialization of identity.

Second, the explanation stressed the *institutional form* adopted by the state. One thing that set Aceh apart from other provinces in the crucial period was the special territory status conferred on it after Darul Islam. This was important in two respects. Special territory status, or rather the technocrats who

were tasked with administering it, normalized Acehnese identity and propagated a series of historical myths about Aceh (the glorious Islamic past, Aceh's unique contribution to Indonesian independence, and so forth) that became bases of nationalist imagination in later years. But special territory status also contributed to Acehnese grievance—not because Aceh was treated worse than other provinces, but because its experiences of political authoritarianism and centralization contrasted so starkly with the promises it had received. In this sense, at least, Acehnese ethnonationalism was a child of the Indonesian state in its most authoritarian guise during the New Order years.

Third, *international context*, a factor neglected in many studies of nationalist movements, was crucial. This element was fundamental not in the first instance because of the tangible support that Acehnese nationalists gained internationally (although both Libya and the diaspora were significant), but in the realm of imagination. Hasan di Tiro's experiences in the United States provided an ideational context and a set of ideas about sovereignty and self-determination that helped transform thinking about Aceh and its place in the world. By reimagining Aceh as a rightful member in a world of nation-states, di Tiro and his colleagues effected a transition from Islamism, which was then losing steam as a basis for violent resistance, to nationalism, which was better able to sustain an insurgency in the hostile environment of New Order Aceh.

Fourth, once the nationalist conflict began, a range of *sustaining factors* kicked in to expand and prolong it. Most important (although not emphasized in this book because it has attracted much attention elsewhere) was the gross military violence perpetrated by the state, which deepened popular revulsion, spread support for nationalism to new social groups, and stiffened the resolve of those who were already committed. Nationalist insurgency was also sustained and shaped by local cultural practices and social structures, and by a black economy through which the rebels could fund themselves.

In assessing why the nationalist conflict ended, at least in its armed form, we can point to similar dynamics. Path dependency, for instance, was crucial in that it was not simply GAM's bad military situation that made its leaders believe they had reached a stalemate in 2005 (its military situation had been worse before), but the fact that this stalemate came so soon after they had believed themselves on the cusp of victory in 1999–2001. The international context was also important; if in the past the nation-state system had provided both an idiom and a goal for Acehnese nationalists, their renewed insurgency coincided with a post-Cold War period of growing international interest in promoting peace in internal conflicts. The success of GAM's strategy of internationalization ironically produced a dawning realization that they could not

reach their independence goal but could gain international recognition and support if they compromised.

Finally, and above all, the transformation of the Indonesian state by democratic reform in the post-Soeharto years was an essential condition for ending the armed conflict. This was an ironic outcome, because the post-1998 explosion of violence in Aceh also furnishes evidence to support those who argue that abrupt democratization of poorly institutionalized multiethnic autocracies increases civil war risk. But in the longer term, especially once the immediate post-Soeharto euphoria of Aceh's nationalists had been drowned in bloody military reprisals, democratization proved crucial to a settlement. The willingness of Indonesia's new democratic leaders to accommodate regional demands through autonomy arrangements was central. So too was the democratic discourse that had infused the anti-Soeharto movement, worked its way through the younger generation of Acehnese nationalists, and thus influenced GAM, setting the scene for compromise. If Acehnese ethnonationalism was a child of Indonesian authoritarianism, its blunting was a product of democratization.

What, then, of the long-term prospects? Viewed in historical perspective, GAM's dramatic change of position on independence was obviously potentially significant. In the early decades of the twentieth century, modern Acehnese and Indonesian identities had emerged together, intertwined and almost indistinguishable for their adherents. The years after independence had begun a process of untwisting. The gap between the two began to widen greatly in the 1970s, when Aceh Merdeka was formed, and yawned to a seemingly unbridgeable distance during the mass protests after the collapse of Soeharto's government. Now there is renewed possibility of reintegration of Acehnese and Indonesian identities.

The first three years of the peace process suggest that involvement by former nationalists in the mundane business of competing for and running government might over time erode the power of ethnic appeals. As described in the last chapter, there was a rapid shift of concern toward economic and governance matters. This does not mean that the old conflict will be forgotten, but it may become less central. As Brubaker (1998, 280) puts it:

> In my view, national conflicts are seldom "solved" or "resolved." Somewhat like conflicts between conflicting paradigms in a Kuhnian history of science, they are more likely to fade way, to lose their centrality and salience as ordinary people—and political entrepreneurs—turn to other concerns, or as a new generation grows up to whom old quarrels seem largely irrelevant.

It would be premature, however, to imagine that the heightened sense of Acehnese identity and grievance produced by the conflict years will quickly

fade. Stephen Van Evera (2001) argues that even if we concede the constructivist point that ethnic identities are not immutable but may change over long periods, once an identity has become fixed in the modern age it will rarely disappear, especially if reinforced by experiences of mass violence. It is probably too late to imagine an easy remeshing of Indonesian and Acehnese identities. It should also be recalled that there is an element of artifice in the settlement reached in Aceh. Unlike in many democratic states, advocating independence in Aceh remains a crime. Separatist nationalism per se is not being accommodated into Indonesia's democratic system; rather, its adherents are being incorporated after they realized they had failed. This means that nationalism will for many years haunt the peace settlement, as an oppositional ideology and platform potentially available to individuals disillusioned with either national or local leaders.

Moreover, recalling that Acehnese nationalism was itself partly a product of the institutional forms adopted by the state in the territory, it should also be conceded that self-government arrangements are likely to entrench and institutionalize Acehnese difference from the rest of Indonesia. Aceh has been given rights (such as local parties and *shari'a*) that are different from those of other regions. Moreover, it is all but inevitable that there will be many future points of friction between the governments in Banda Aceh and Jakarta, especially as the threat of a return to mass violence fades and thus ceases to constrain the actors. Tension is likely on an array of issues: apportionment of natural gas revenues, curriculum in Acehnese schools, and reparations for past human rights cases, to name a few. The central government reserves the right to vet provincial regulations and, if they contradict superior laws, to annul them. In this way, the old sense of Acehnese grievance is likely to live on. The Helsinki peace agreement is thus unlikely to mean the end of ethnic politics in Aceh, or of conflict between many Acehnese and Jakarta. The most that can be hoped is that the conflict will be reconfigured, not as a violent one but as one between center and periphery in a democratic context.

REFERENCE MATTER

Notes

CHAPTER 1

1. The death toll figure I have given is a conservative estimate. In July 2007 the Aceh Reintegration Agency, the government body charged with providing assistance to conflict victims, put the number of those dead as the result of the violence at about thirty-three thousand. However, this figure is almost certainly an exaggeration. It was calculated by the lowest levels of the bureaucracy in Aceh as part of the government's attempt to identify recipients of *diyat* (compensation) payments; there were thus economic incentives for bureaucrats to manipulate and corrupt the figures, and for civilians to claim non-conflict-related deaths of relatives as having been caused by the conflict. Anecdotal reports suggest that there was considerable double-counting and that much false data were included in the BRA estimate. I arrived at the more modest figure by combining two sources: an estimate of deaths by the government-created Independent Commission to Investigate Violence in Aceh (Komisi Independen Pengusutan Tindak Kekerasan di Aceh), which stated that up to the end of the Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM, Military Operations Zone) period in 1998, one to three thousand were killed and nine to fourteen hundred were missing (presumed dead) (International Crisis Group 2001b, 3); and for the post-1998 period, various annual or other periodic death counts released by senior military and police officers, government officials, and human rights organizations. The latter figures can be found in various newspaper and online media reports, including *Kompas*, December 24, 1999; *Washington Times*, February 22, 2002; *Kontras*, January 2001; *Media Indonesia*, November 29, 2002; *Jakarta Post*, June 9, 2005; and *AcehKita*, May 31, 2005. Together they indicate that *at least* 7,200 persons died because of violence between 1998 and 2005. This figure is certain to be an underestimate, however, not only because of gaps in the record and different counting methods, but also because some of the bodies that released these counts (notably the Indonesian military) were known to underreport some categories of deaths (the military especially undercounted the deaths of civilians). My rough estimate of twelve to twenty thousand deaths takes into account that the latter reports underreported deaths by about 30 percent and that the Aceh Reintegration Agency overreported them by at least 30 percent.

2. A note on Hasan di Tiro's last name is required here. *Tiro* is the name of an upland area in the Pidie region. Acehnese have long used place names to refer to prominent *ulama* and other leaders. The name *Tiro* was first associated with Hasan di Tiro's family when it was used for his great-grandfather Tgk Cik di Tiro, which literally means the "great *tengku* in Tiro." Hasan di Tiro thus not only inherited this name from his great-grandfather but also used it to designate his place of origin. Acehnese use *Hasan Tiro* and *Hasan di Tiro* interchangeably when referring to him, but he has tended to use the latter form in his written work. For the sake of consistency I have adopted the second form throughout this book.

To this day, respected *ulama* in Aceh are often known by the names of places where they live and run their *dayah* (boarding schools). Thus, for example, Tgk Haji Ibrahim Bardan is better known as Abu Panton because his school is located in Panton Labu, North Aceh. Many GAM leaders and commanders also adopted the practice of naming themselves according to their place of origin or where they resided and wielded influence—for example, Darwis Djeunib (Djeunib is a subdistrict in Bireuen) and Ilyas Pase (Pase is the name GAM used for North Aceh).

3. This assumption that nationhood gives rise to a right to statehood and sovereignty emerges if we use classical definitions of the nation and nationalism such as those offered by Benedict Anderson (1983, 15), for whom a nation is "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign," or Ernest Gellner (1983, 1), for whom "nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent." These interpretations link nationalism to political sovereignty and thus imply that nationalism is in essence "state-seeking" (to borrow from Brubaker 1998, 276). Acehnese nationalism was certainly of this type.

4. In this book I treat Hasan di Tiro's last name as if it is a European surname and thus usually refer to him as di Tiro. I have made this choice because during his long residence overseas he referred to himself in this way, and it has become conventional for writers to refer to him as either Tiro or di Tiro. Moreover, in Aceh it is rare to hear him referred to even as Tengku Hasan, and GAM supporters nowadays more frequently call him *wali nanggroe*, guardian of the state. When referring to other Acehnese or Indonesian persons, I follow local practice, meaning that in most cases I use only their first name to refer to them after they are first mentioned (thus Darwis Djeunib is referred to as Darwis, not Djeunib; Malik Mahmud is Malik, not Mahmud; and so on).

CHAPTER 2

1. Readers will note that such words as *uleebalang* and *nanggroe* have been spelled in different ways over the past century, as Europeans encountering the Acehnese language for the first time tried to spell these words using the Latin alphabet, and later as Indonesians began to do the same. I have not changed the spellings used in quotations, but elsewhere I have used the simplified spelling commonly used in Aceh today, which does not use diacritics.

2. A caveat is necessary. Part of the problem might be that few sources from before the twentieth century have survived to illustrate how ordinary people thought of themselves. Some Dutch sources hint at such an identity. Snouck Hurgronje (1906, vol. I, 168), for example, remarks on the "frank conceit of the Achehnese, who will allow no discussion as to the excellence of their *adats* [customs and traditions] and of all their country contains, and

to the worthlessness of all that belongs to other countries and peoples." Such observations were made as part of a colonial project that had as its aim the subjugation of the Acehnese, and they should be treated with caution.

3. For English language discussions and translations see Snouck Hurgronje 1906, vol. II, 100–117; Penders 1977, 207–214; Siegel 1979, 229–266; Iskandar 1986; and Wieringa 1998. The following discussion is also based on an Indonesian translation in Alfian, 1992.

4. My thanks to Michael Laffan for pointing this out.

5. According to Barbara Leigh, a long-time observer of education in Aceh, although the Acehnese language was officially allowed only in the first two years of primary education, in practice it tended to be used more than that, especially in rural areas where students' knowledge of Indonesian was poor (personal communication, July 20, 2008). Use of Indonesian by children increased in the 1970s and 1980s, due to penetration of television into villages.

6. There is contention over di Tiro's birth date. His *Unfinished Diary* (di Tiro 1984a, 8) states that he turned forty-six on September 4, 1976, meaning he was born in 1930. Jenkins (1980, 42) gives his birth date as September 4, 1928. Di Tiro's *Democracy for Indonesia* (1958, 211) says he was born in 1923. Other reports from the 1950s claim he was twenty-nine years old in 1955, making his year of birth 1926 (Bagian Dokumentasi n.d, 487).

7. Correspondence between Kohlberg, di Tiro, and various officials on di Tiro's migration status is in the Hoover Institution archives, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box No. 186. The quotation is from a letter from di Tiro to Kohlberg dated March 18, 1958.

8. It seems that some U.S. support came late in the conflict, facilitated by the connections that Acehnese Darul Islam leaders developed with the U.S.-backed regional rebels of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, or PRRI) (Nessen 2006, 182). Nessen (2006, 182) interviewed one former Darul Islam leader (and founding member of Aceh Merdeka) who lives in Malaysia, Amir Rasyid Mahmud, who claimed that di Tiro sent him to South Vietnam to organize an arms shipment. Later, some people alleged that di Tiro broke his promises to purchase weapons, and kept money given to him for this purpose.

9. One such cold warrior who remained close to di Tiro was Robert J. Morris, who had been chief counsel to the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security in the 1950s. A conservative Republican and unsuccessful Senate candidate, Morris authored various books warning that America was imperiled by communism and disarmament, and he founded the University of Plano in Texas to teach disabled children. In 1975 the university awarded di Tiro an honorary degree in law (Hays 1997; di Tiro 1975).

10. The second description is from an undated article in the *Saturday Evening Post* in the Hoover Institution archives, Edward G. Lansdale Collection, Box No. 30, File 637.

11. Aceh was arguably not unique in this respect. Thus Davidson (2008, 42) argues that among the Malays in Western Borneo during the colonial period (in contrast to the mostly non-Muslim inland Dayaks), ethnic identity formation was inhibited in part because "Muslim took precedence over Malay as an identity marker."

CHAPTER 3

1. For security reasons, I rarely recorded interviews with informants in Aceh or Malaysia. Thus some material from interviews are presented in this book as fieldnote summaries rather than as transcripts.

2. As late as 1975 it was reported that 30 percent of thirty-nine bridges between Banda Aceh and Sigli were damaged, as were 90 percent of the forty bridges between Banda Aceh and Meulaboh in West Aceh (*Waspada*, April 30, 1975).

3. From a declassified U.S. Department of State Document, p. 1, MEDAN 00388 210046Z.

4. I have spoken to one Malaysian businessman who says that di Tiro offered him rights to exploit an independent Aceh's oil *before* di Tiro set out for Indonesia that year.

5. The precise date is controversial. Di Tiro's version is that he declared independence on December 4, 1976. Others say he did not form the movement until later, in early or mid-1977. There is no contemporary evidence for di Tiro's claim, and I did not speak to anyone who had attended the supposed December event. Nevertheless, I have received no strong evidence that provides me with reasons to doubt di Tiro, and in the remainder of the book I follow convention and date the foundation of GAM as December 4, 1976.

6. The account in the preceding three paragraphs is based on media sources and on interviews with surviving members of the group who are now outside Indonesia (especially Husaini Hasan) and several of their contemporaries in Medan in January 2002.

7. The one exception is the highland district of Central Aceh, where Darul Islam was strong but GAM was weak. This exception can be explained by the shift from religious to ethnic framing of rebellion, which caused less support among the Gayo minority.

8. The quotations are from two letters dated March 12, 1978, and June 22, 1978. Hoover Institution, Edward G. Lansdale Collection, Box 7, File: Tiro, Hasan Muhammad.

9. For example, Umar di Tiro, Hasan di Tiro's uncle, contributed an article to *Sinar Darussalam*, the Syiah Kuala University journal, that argued that the Acehnese never formally surrendered to the Dutch and were thus never truly defeated by them (Tiro 1970). Immediately before Aceh Merdeka became publicly known (but after, if we believe Hasan di Tiro's account, his declaration of independence), local newspapers even published summaries of di Tiro's own writings on Acehnese history and on Aceh's battles against the Dutch, indicating that there was nothing inherently controversial in many of di Tiro's historical views (*Waspada*, January 18 and 19, 1977). The claim that Aceh had refused to surrender to the Dutch was part of mainstream discourse; see, for example, Hasjmy 1987.

10. Dr. Husaini is here referring to a characteristic form of many Javanese names—such as Soeharto, Sukarno, and so on.

CHAPTER 4

1. A nearby *ulama* later confirmed that Abu Hanan was a specialist in *jimat* (talismans). He could make miniature houses and put them into a bottle, and no one knew how he did it. He was famous for an incident in which a bridge in Lhoksokun was about to collapse; he lifted it up using a mysterious power (Abu Panton, interview with author, East Aceh, February 18, 2007).

2. For an application of a similar argument in relation to communal conflicts in post-Soeharto Indonesia, see Klinken 2007.

3. Luth Ari Linge was a pseudonym for Yusra Habib Abdul Gani.

4. Compare to Anderson's (1983, 10–12) analysis of the ability of the nation to transcend individual mortality.

5. BTM was short for *Balai Tempat Mengaji*, an Indonesian language phrase for the *balee beut*, the open-sided and covered wooden platforms found in most Acehnese villages, where

communal Quranic recitation takes place. BTM was taken as a name by many of Ahmad Dewi's students.

6. For more discussions of invulnerability and related practices in the insurgency, see Siapno 2002, 34–36; and Jones 1997, 11. For comments by a practitioner, see *Kontras*, July 2001, 17–23.

7. In detailing the self-perceptions of Acehnese refugees in the United States, Daniel Birchok (2004, 40) prefers the word *staunch* and links it to "an entire repertoire of related terms including rebellious, stubborn, dangerous, hard (*keras*) and others."

8. When a contingent of Turkish aid workers came to Aceh after the 2004 tsunami, many local people started to wear badges and other items bearing the Turkish flag because, as one told a journalist, "Everyone here knows this is Aceh's flag" (Associated Press, February 9, 2005).

9. This story of the training in Libya is taken from about twenty interviews conducted in Europe, Malaysia, and Indonesia between 2001 and 2007. Of those interviewed, some of whom requested not to be named, about fifteen had been in Libya.

10. An article in *Editor* (April 15, 1989, 13) referred to Hasan di Tiro and Zaini Abdullah (who by then had been in Sweden almost a decade): "People say they now live in Belgium. Some say in the U.S. But it is not impossible that they are still in Indonesia. Or, it could be, they are dead."

11. Information in this paragraph was provided confidentially. According to one source, GAM fighters possessed only forty-four weapons prior to this shipment.

12. This twenty-two-page document, entitled *Rahasia: Perkembangan GPK Aceh di Malaysia*, was signed by Defense Attaché Colonel Erman Hidayat and dated April 1997. A member of the Acehnese community in Kuala Lumpur gave me a copy. Although it looks genuine, I cannot fully vouch for its authenticity. The quotations are from pages 16 and 15.

13. In the recollection of one detainee at the Lenggeng detention camp, the Acehnese reserved one section of the camp for themselves, and beat strangers who acted "arrogantly." The police lacked courage to enter the jail bearing weapons, fearing they would be overpowered (Asuar, interview with author, Stockholm, June 4, 2004).

14. Sweeney 1998. Information in this paragraph is also based on interviews with Mutasha', June 2, 2004; Asuar, June 4, 2004; Iqbal, June 11, 2004; and others.

CHAPTER 5

1. See also *Forum Keadilan*, May 16, 1999, 86–87.

2. My thanks to Marcus Mietzner for this point.

3. For example, Azwar Abubakar, a PAN leader who became vice governor, was the grandson of the famous *ulama* Abdul Wahab Seulimuem, a leading modernist *ulama* of the 1930s, the first *bupati* of Pidie, and a contributor, from Mecca, to the Darul Islam revolt. Ahmad Farhan Hamid, a PAN member of the national parliament, and Ahmad Humam Hamid, a Syiah Kuala University sociologist and PPP-nominated candidate for governor in 2006, were sons of Ayah Hamid, an *ulama* and Darul Islam leader from Samalanga.

4. PAN legislator Saiful Achmad suggested that di Tiro would be an appropriate first *wali nanggroe* and that the bill should allow for local political parties so that GAM could abandon armed struggle and run for office (*Kompas*, January 17, 2001).

5. In mid-2002 I attended a "cross-fraction" meeting of members of the Aceh DPRD in which the speaker, deputy speaker, and heads of the parties despondently agreed that they had "failed" the population.

CHAPTER 6

1. See especially the various works by the International Crisis Group listed in the bibliography, as well as Schulze 2003, Sukma 2004, Davies 2006, and Miller 2008.

2. In 1999 there were also many eyewitness accounts of military provocation in demonstrations and riots. For instance, several former student activists in Lhokseumawe reported to me instances in which military officers they recognized handed out Aceh Merdeka flags or led crowds in freedom chants. In many of the cases described to me, the most likely motivation seems to have been to create a climate in which potential ringleaders of unrest would step forward and be easily identified. In one instance, community members in South Aceh accused police officers of riding up and down the street in the middle of the night yelling "Merdeka!" According to one witness, the goal was simple: "They are yelling out 'independence' so residents will respond. People who are tricked into responding will be shot" (*Waspada*, November 19, 1999).

3. Khartiwi Daud, one of the first men to build the movement in South Aceh and himself a Malaysian recruit, agreed with this estimate. He put down GAM's success in recruiting South Acehnese migrants in Malaysia to the propensity of people from the district to travel, to their large numbers in Malaysia, and to the high degree of solidarity they evinced once they were there, such that "almost all people from South Aceh in Malaysia were involved in GAM" (interview with author, Banda Aceh, November 6, 2007).

4. Many GAM supporters I interviewed talked of the struggle in hereditary terms, referring to family stories about grandparents or more distant ancestors killed during fights against the Dutch or during Darul Islam, as well as describing family suffering in the GAM years. They usually concluded by linking their personal stories, and the duties those stories conferred upon them, to Aceh's greater struggle, describing the Acehnese as a "vengeful nation" (*bangsa pendendam*) or a "hot nation" (*bangsa panas*).

5. Indonesian journalist Fery Santoro, who spent many months with GAM kidnappers in East Aceh, found them to be religiously observant and saw them punishing thieves they caught in farmers' gardens (Suroso and Dulhajah 2006, 63). Two women who were detained for seven months in the same region were threatened with execution but not sexually assaulted; GAM fighters avoided physical contact with them (Safrida and Soraya 2005, 4).

6. Another student, in South Aceh, had a similar story. He recalled that in his home village residents asked GAM fighters not to turn their village into a "war zone" by launching attacks there. In return the villagers provided them with logistics. The fighters kept to this bargain and even struck a deal with local TNI units to avoid fighting there (confidential interview, Kota Fajar, November 11, 2007).

7. The Menggamat case is difficult to interpret. TNI leaders made great propaganda use of violence that occurred in the area when it was cut off from military control and used as a GAM base in July 2001. The TNI even erected a memorial to GAM victims there. When I visited the area in late 2007, former GAM combatants had returned, and local people, apparently fearing for their safety, were mostly reluctant to discuss in detail what had happened. I did not press them. Former fighters say there was an internal conflict

in GAM, with a small group trying to launch an internal coup and seize weapons. The coup was put down, so this version goes, resulting in some executions and more than one hundred malcontents fleeing to the jungle. An assistant and I managed to speak to some local people in Menggamat. They agreed that there had been an internal conflict, but they also whispered that the plotters had been supported by many local people who were tired of exactions and arbitrary behavior. On the other hand, even some of those punished by GAM agreed that GAM was first established in the Menggamat area by a local man who had spent some time away in Lhokseumawe, and that many locals (a commonly cited figure was 135) had joined the movement, so the analysis that violence was purely a result of outsiders moving into the area does not seem to hold. Locals also stated that only seven participants in the coup attempt were executed, some apparently very cruelly, rather than the "tens" who perished according to military accounts (for example, *Serambi Indonesia*, July 19, 2004). I did not verify stories of GAM torture and barbaric killings of civilians that were unconnected to this dispute, although horrific stories of abuses by military forces in the district were in wide circulation. Obviously this does not necessarily mean that such violence did not occur.

8. In a few areas, notably Southeast Aceh and Tamiang, a few persons of Javanese descent joined GAM and even became low-level commanders.

9. See Schulze 2004, 24–29, for further discussion and examples.

10. I did not manage to locate or interview Win Rimba Raya.

11. For example, *Media Indonesia*, July 25, 2000, reported the discovery of almost nineteen thousand bullets manufactured in Pindad (the state armament factory in Bandung) in a truck in North Aceh. According to some GAM sources, it was possible, but difficult, to buy ammunition for AK-47s from Java because some in the Indonesian security forces used them. These bullets were more expensive—seven to eight thousand rupiah (around US$0.80) each—than M16 bullets, which were only three to four thousand rupiah (around US$0.40) (confidential interview, Banda Aceh, August 17, 2006). A fighter involved in purchasing arms both in Jakarta and on the open water between Aceh and Thailand said that the prices were similar in both places—an M16 from Thailand cost around nineteen million rupiah (about US$1,900) and an AK-47 cost twenty-two to twenty-seven million rupiah (US$2,200–2,700)—whereas an S-1 from Jakarta cost twenty-two million rupiah and an M16 cost twenty-five million rupiah, with bullets about ten thousand rupiah (US$1.00) each. In a typical shipment from Jakarta in South Aceh they would receive about twenty guns and thirty thousand bullets, for a total cost of about US$70,000 per shipment (confidential interview with author, Kota Fajar, November 11, 2007).

CHAPTER 7

1. Siaran Pers, Aksi Anti Hegemoni Amerika Serikat BEM Unsyiah [BEM Unsyiah press release: Action against hegemony of the United States], February 12, 2002.

2. The best-known such detractor was Fauzi Hasbi, an early leader of Aceh Merdeka who later professed continuing loyalty to the Darul Islam model. His was, however, a complex story in which military intelligence agents also played a part (International Crisis Group, 2002).

3. Letter from Hasan di Tiro to Edward Lansdale, dated June 22, 1978. Hoover Institution, Edward G. Lansdale Collection. Box 7, File: Tiro, Hasan Muhammad.

4. The quotation is from a letter dated January 15, 1985, from Hasan di Tiro to Arnold Beichman. Hoover Institution, folder of correspondence concerning the Tiro, Tengku Hasan Di Collection.

5. In one Iranian newspaper (*Kayhan International*, October 17, 1982), he said that in Aceh "the prevailing sentiments toward the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot be other than complete identification, total sympathy, and great admiration for the perseverance, sincerity, and dedication of our Iranian brothers and sisters. The sight of an *ulama* with the turban on his head and a gun on his shoulder is a moving symbol of total mobilization for Achehnese Sumatrans." Hoover Institution, Tiro, Hasan M. Di Collection, Box No. 1.

6. Interview in *Diaro De Lisboa*, Saturday, April 29, 1989; translated in "Free Atjeh Sumatra in World Press," 1989, Vol. III, published by Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front, Norsborg, Sweden, p. 26.

7. Note that this statement was in English; those in Indonesian or Acehnese tended to be less explicit.

CHAPTER 8

1. The quotations are from letters from Hasan di Tiro to Edward Lansdale, dated April 23, 1977, and June 22, 1978. Hoover Institution archives, Edward G. Lansdale Collection, Box 7, File: Tiro, Hasan Muhammad.

2. Letter from Edward Lansdale to Hasan di Tiro, dated May 20, 1977. Hoover Institution archives, Edward G. Lansdale Collection, Box 7, File: Tiro, Hasan Muhammad.

3. Letter to Edward Lansdale from Robert B. Oakley, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, dated June 20, 1978. Hoover Institution archives, Edward G. Lansdale Collection, Box 7, File: Tiro, Hasan Muhammad.

4. Letter from Hasan di Tiro to Arnold Beichman, dated January 15, 1985. Hoover Institution, folder of correspondence concerning the Tiro, Tengku Hasan Di Collection.

5. In this respect, Ahtisaari and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) played a role similar to that of the HDC, which in Huber's (2004, 47) estimation had "aligned itself with the government's view of the issues under negotiation" and seen its goal as helping to "wean GAM from armed insurrection by developing its interest in, and capacity for, political representation." Indonesian critics of the talks opposed foreign mediation because they believed it might lead to independence. In reality, foreign mediators were trying to persuade GAM to give up that goal.

6. Another factor was the shifting international climate in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Renewed emphasis on military solutions and security rather than on peacemaking and diplomacy in the policies of major Western powers apparently made some GAM leaders worry that continuing the armed struggle might lead to the movement's stigmatization as a terrorist movement.

7. According to an e-mail distributed on Acehnese activist discussion lists under the name of Hanakaru Hokagata, a pen name long used by Irwandi Yusuf, former GAM fighters reacted angrily at a meeting when ordered to support Humam Hamid. Some shouted, "We fought for thirty years and tens of thousands of lives were sacrificed—was all this just to help PPP win, a party which during the military emergency stamped us as being *bughat*?" (e-mail dated September 12, 2006, IACSF@yahoogroups.com mailing list). For the split see International Crisis Group 2006b.

8. Observations derived from interviews with GAM candidates and campaigners after

the elections, in February 2007. Accords with the analysis in International Crisis Group 2007.

9. The campaign speeches of Tengku Ilyas Pase in North Aceh were distinguished by promises of free education, free health care, and dramatically improved infrastructure. According to several informants, he promised that if he was elected, his government would pay for such promises by printing money (interviews in North Aceh, February 2007).

10. This approach had also been suggested to the movement by its Australian advisor in the peace talks, Damien Kingsbury (Kingsbury 2005, 2006, 31).

11. GAM spokesperson Anwar Husein told *AcehKita* (February 8, 2005) that GAM had been offered "billions" of rupiah, but "Commander Muzakkir Manaf rejected that offer." Suryodiningrat and Siboro (2005) speculate about government attempts to co-opt GAM leaders by offering them "millions of dollars."

CHAPTER 9

1. In the 1960s and 1970s, most analyses of Aceh before 1945 (see, for example, Reid 1969, Siegel 1969) had an almost teleological aspect, describing episodes of Acehnese resistance as part of a process that would eventually give rise to the Indonesian national movement. For example, Reid (1969, 154) writes of an 1873 attempt, based in Singapore, to disseminate Islamic agitation against the Dutch attack as "an important new step in Indonesian development."

Bibliography

Abduh, Umar. 2001. *Membongkar gerakan sesat NII di balik pesantren mewah al-Zaytun*. Manggarai: Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam.

Abu Jihad. 2000a. *Hasan Tiro dan pergolakan Aceh*. Jakarta: PT Aksara Centra.

———. 2000b. *Pemikiran-pemikiran politik Hasan Tiro dalam Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*. Jakarta: Titian Ilmu Insani.

Acciaioli, Greg, 1985. Culture as art: From practice to spectacle in Indonesia. *Canberra Anthropology* 8(1&2):148–172.

Aceh Dalam Angka. 1972. Banda Aceh: Kantor Sensus dan Statistik Daerah Istimewa Aceh.

Afrida, Nana. 2004. In Aceh, Rp 500 not only pays for a steaming cup of coffee. *Jakarta Post*, July 25:4.

Agam, T. T. 1930. Boleh lihat kerdjanja kolonie politiek. *Soeara Atjeh*, March 1:2.

Al Chaidar. 2000. *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka jihad rakyat Aceh mewujudkan Negara Islam* (rev. ed.). Cibinong: Madani Press.

Al Chaidar, Sayed Mudhahar Hamid, and Yarmen Dinamika. 1999. *Aceh bersimbah darah: Menungkap status Daerah Operasi Militer di Aceh 1989–1998*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kaustar.

Alfian, Teuku Ibrahim. 1992. *Sastra perang: Sebuah pembicaraan mengenai Hikayat Perang Sabil*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.

———. 2006. Aceh and the holy war (*prang sabil*). *Verandah of violence: The background to the Aceh problem*, ed. Anthony Reid, 109–120. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Amnesty International. 1993. "*Shock therapy": Restoring order in Aceh, 1989–1993*. London: International Secretariat, Amnesty International.

———. 2004. New military operations, old patterns of human rights abuses in Aceh (Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, NAD). http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/ASA210332004ENGLISH/$File/ASA2103304.pdf

Andaya, Leonard Y. 2001. Aceh's contribution to standards of Malayness. *Archipel* 61:29–68.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

———. 1992. The New World disorder. *New Left Review* 193:3–13.
———. 1999. Indonesian nationalism today and in the future. *New Left Review* 235:3–17.
Anderson, Lisa. 1983. Qaddafi's Libya. *The Islamic resurgence*, ed. John L. Esposito, 134–149. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Arif, Abdullah (ed.). c. 1951. *Bingkisan kenang2an kongres besar PUSA dan P. PUSA*. Kutaradja: Seksi Penerangan / Penjiaran Panitia Raya Kongres Besar PUSA/P.PUSA.
Armstrong, John A. 1982. *Nations before nationalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Asia Watch. 1990. *Indonesia: Human rights abuses in Aceh*. New York: Asia Watch.
———. 1991. *Indonesia: Continuing human rights violations in Aceh*. New York: Asia Watch.
———. 1992. *Indonesia: Commission of inquiry needed for Aceh*. New York: Asia Watch.
Aspinall, Edward. 1999. The 1999 general election in Aceh. *Pemilu: The 1999 Indonesian election*, ed. Susan Blackburn, 29–42. Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute.
———. 2005. *The Helsinki agreement: A more promising basis for peace in Aceh?* Washington, DC: East-West Center.
———. 2006. Violence and identity formation in Aceh under Indonesian rule. *Verandah of violence: The background to the Aceh problem*, ed. Anthony Reid, 149–176. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
———. 2007a. The construction of grievance: Natural resources and identity in a separatist conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51(6):950–972.
———. 2007b. From Islamism to nationalism in Aceh, Indonesia. *Nations and Nationalism* 13(2):245–263.
Aspinall, Edward, and Harold Crouch. 2003. *The Aceh peace process: Why it failed*. Washington, DC: East-West Center.
Bagian Dokumentasi. n.d. *Sekitar peristiwa Daud Beureueh III, Kronik Kementerian Penerangan No. 20*. Djakarta: Kementerian Penerangan.
Bartkus, Viva Ona. 1999. *The dynamic of secession*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Bertrand, Jacques. 2004. *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Indonesia*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Birchok, Daniel Andrew. 2004. Channeling echoes: The collection and narration of Acehnese effective histories in America. MA thesis., University of Michigan.
Biro Pusat Statistik [Central Bureau of Statistics]. 1974. *Sensus Penduduk 1971 Population of Sumatra Utara*. Jakarta: Biro Pusat Statistik.
Boediono and Ibrahim Hasan. 1974. An economic survey of D. I. Aceh. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 10(2):35–55.
Boland, B. J. 1971. *The struggle of Islam in modern Indonesia*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
Bowen, John R. 1989. Narrative form and political incorporation: Changing uses of history in Aceh, Indonesia. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31(4):671–693.
———. 2002. The myth of global ethnic conflict. *Genocide: An anthropological reader*, ed. Alexander Laban Hinton, 334–343. Malden: Blackwell.
Brass, Paul B. 1997. *Theft of an idol: Text and context in the representation of collective violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Brown, David. 1994. *The state and ethnic politics in Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge.
———. 2000. *Contemporary nationalism: Civic, ethnocultural and multicultural politics*. London: Routledge.
Brubaker, Rogers. 1996. *Nationalism reframed. Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1998. Myths and misconceptions in the study of nationalism. *The state of the nation: Ernest Gellner and the theory of nationalism*, ed. John A. Hall, 272–306. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2002. Ethnicity without groups. *European Journal of Sociology* 43:163–189.

Buchanan, Allen. 1992. Self-determination and the right to secede. *Journal of International Affairs* 45(2):347–366.

Central Bureau for Information, ASNLF/GAM. 2002. Untitled statement on the Islamic dress code. Released in the name of Tengku Isnandar, March 5. Distributed on Reformasitotal e-mail list.

Chauvel, Richard. 1984. *Constructing Papuan nationalism: History, ethnicity, and adaptation*. Washington, DC: East-West Center.

Chima, Jugdep S. 2002. Back to the future in 2002? A model of Sikh separatism in Punjab. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 25:19–39.

Christie, Clive J. 1996. *A modern history of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, nationalism and separatism*. London: Tauris.

Cohen, Margot. 1999. Captives of the cause. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 2:16–18.

Coker, Christopher. 2005–2006. Cultural ruthlessness and the war against terror. *Australian Army Journal* 3(1):145–164.

Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2005. Resource rents, governance and conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4):625–633.

Cribb, Robert. 2001. Independence for Java? New national projects for an old empire. *Indonesia today: Challenges of history*, ed. Grayson J. Lloyd and Shannon L. Smith, 298–307. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Damsté, H. T. 1928. Hikajat prang sabi. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 84:545–609.

Davidson, Jamie S. 2008. *From rebellion to riots: Collective violence on Indonesian Borneo*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Davies, Matthew N. 2006. *Indonesia's war over Aceh: Last stand on Mecca's porch*. New York: Routledge.

Dawood, Dayan, and Sjafrizal. 1989. Aceh: The LNG boom and enclave development. *Unity in diversity: Regional economic development in Indonesia since 1970*, ed. Hal Hill, 107–123. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Dijk, Cornelis van. 1981. *Rebellion under the banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*. The Hague: M. Nijhoff.

di Tiro, Hasan M. 1948. *Perang Atjeh, 1873 M.–1927 M.* Jogjakarta: Pustaka Tiro.

———. 1958. *Democracy for Indonesia*. n.p.: Penerbit Seulawah Aceh.

———. 1960. Statement by the Representative of the Federal Republic of Indonesia on Mr. Sukarno's Appearance Before the General Assembly of the United Nations, October 3.

———. 1973. *100th Anniversary of the Battle of Bandar Atjeh, April 23, 1873–April 23, 1973*. Atjeh Institute in America.

———. 1975. Remarks by Tengku Hasan M. di Tiro at Commencement Exercises, University of Plano, Texas, May 11.

———. 1979. *The drama of Achehnese history, 1873–1978: A play in eight acts*. Aceh: Ministry of Education.

———. 1984a. *The price of freedom (The unfinished diary)*. Norsborg, Sweden: Information Department, National Liberation Front Acheh Sumatra.

———. 1984b. *385 years of confrontation between Islam and 'Kufr' in Indonesia: 1599–1984*. Lecture given to International Seminar of Muslim Journalists, City University of London, August 15.

———. 1986. Speech by Dr. Tengku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro, president, National Liberation Front of Acheh Sumatra, Before the World Conference of Liberation Movements in Tripoli, March 15.

———. 1995. *The new colonialism: Denominated "Indonesians!"* Speech at UNPO General Assembly, The Hague, January 20.

———. n.d. Untitled and undated speech directed to members of the Preparatory Committee of the Mathabah International Conference. Tripoli.

Drake, Christine. 1989. *National integration in Indonesia: Patterns and policies*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Drewes, G.W.J. 1980. *Two Achehnese poems*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Drexler, Elizabeth F. 2008. *Aceh, Indonesia: Securing the insecure state*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Esposito, John L. 1984. *Islam and politics*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Eye on Aceh. 2007. *The 'golden' crop? Palm oil in post-tsunami Aceh*. Available at http://www.aceh-eye.org

Fadhil, Rahmat. 2002. Mewujudkan kampus religius: Pondasi Aceh masa depan. *Kutaraja*, March 24.

Fealy, Greg. 1998. Ulama and politics in Indonesia: A history of Nahdlatul Ulama, 1952–1967. Ph.D. diss., Monash University.

———. 2002. Creating "total Muslims": The Tarbiyah movement and the rise of neo-revivalism in Indonesia. Unpublished research paper, Australian National University.

Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2000. Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity. *International Organization* 54(4):845–877.

———. 2003. Ethnicity, insurgency and civil war. *American Political Science Review* 97(1):75–90.

Feith, Herbert, and Lance Castles (eds.). 1970. *Indonesian political thinking, 1945–65*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Foulcher, Keith. 1990. The construction of an Indonesian national culture: Patterns of hegemony and resistance. *State and civil society in Indonesia*, ed. Arief Budiman, 301–320. Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University.

Freeman, Michael. 1996. Democracy and dynamite: The peoples' right to self-determination. *Political Studies* 44:746–761.

Gaouette, N. 1999. Indonesian togetherness at stake. *Christian Science Monitor*, May 18.

Gates, Scott. 2002. Recruitment and allegiance: The microfoundations of rebellion. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1):111–130.

Gelanggang, A. H. 1956. *Rahasia pemberontakan Atjeh dan kegagalan politik Mr. S. M. Amin*. Kutaradja: Pustaka Murnihati.

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and nationalism*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

———. 1997. *Nationalism*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Hadiz, Vedi R., and David Bourchier (eds.). 2003. *Indonesian politics and society: A reader*. New York: Routledge.

Harsono, Ganis. 1977. *Recollections of an Indonesian diplomat in the Sukarno era*. St. Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland Press.

Hasjmy, Ali. 1977. Aceh tidak pernah menyerahkan kedaulatannya kepada Belanda: Memperingati 114 tahun perang Aceh. *Waspada*, April 6, 4–5; continued in *Waspada*, April 7, 4–5.

Hastings, Adrian. 1997. *The construction of nationhood: Ethnicity, religion, and nationalism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hays, Constance L. 1997. Robert J. Morris is dead at 82: Crusader against communists. *New York Times*, January 2:5.

Henley, David E. F. 1995. Regional nationalism in a colonial state: A case study from the Dutch East Indies. *Political Geography* 14(1):31–58.

Herriman, Nicholas. 2007. A din of whispers: Community, state control, and violence in Indonesia. Ph.D. diss., University of Western Australia.

Hill, Hal, and Anna Weidemann. 1989. Regional development in Indonesia: Patterns and issues. *Unity in diversity: Regional economic development in Indonesia since 1970*, ed. Hal Hill, 3–54. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hiorth, Finngeir. 1986a. Free Aceh: An impossible dream? *Kabar Seberang* 17:182–194.

———. 1986b. Sketches of Aceh. *Indonesia Reports*, Culture/Society Supplement 18:1–8.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1990. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. *Aceh under martial law: Inside the secret war*. http://hrw.org/reports/2003/indonesia1203/indonesia1203.pdf

Huber, Konrad. 2004. *The HDC in Aceh: Promises and pitfalls of NGO mediation and implementation*. Washington, DC: East-West Center.

Hughes, James. 2007. *Chechnya: From nationalism to jihad*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hugo, Graeme. 1993. Indonesian labour migration to Malaysia: Trends and policy implications. *Asian Journal of Social Science* 21(1):36–70.

Hutchinson, John. 2005. *Nations as zones of conflict*. London: Sage.

Ibrahimy, M. Nur El. 2001. *Peranan Tgk. M. Daud Beureu-eh dalam pergolakan Aceh*. Jakarta: Media Da'wah.

International Crisis Group. 2001a. *Aceh: Can autonomy stem the conflict?* Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

———. 2001b. *Aceh: Why military force won't bring lasting peace*. Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

———. 2002. *How the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network operates: Indonesia backgrounder report*. Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

———. 2005a. *Aceh: A new chance for peace*. Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

———. 2005b. *Aceh: So far, so good*. Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

———. 2006a. *Aceh: Now for the hard part*. Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

———. 2006b. *Aceh's local elections: The role of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM)*. Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

———. 2007. *Indonesia: How GAM won in Aceh*. Brussels and Jakarta: International Crisis Group.

International Organization for Migration. 2007. *A psychological needs assessment of communities in fourteen conflict-affected districts in Aceh*. Jakarta: International Organization for Migration.

Ishak, Otto Syamsuddin. 2003. *Sang Martir: Teungku Bantaqiah*. Jakarta: Yappika.

Iskandar, T. 1986. The Hikayat Prang Geud_ng. *Cultural contact and textual interpretation: Papers from the fourth European colloquium on Malay and Indonesian studies held in Leiden in 1983*, ed. C. D. Grijns and S. O. Robson, 94–120. Dodrecht: Foris.

Jacoeb, Isma'il. 1940. *Risalah bertebarnja bendera Islam ditanah Atjeh*. Blangdjiroen.

Jakub, Ismail. 1960. *Tengku Tjik Di-Tiro (Muhammad Saman): Pahlawan besar dalam perang Atjeh (1881–1891)*, 3rd ed. Djakarta: Bulang Bintang. [Originally published 1943.]

Jayawardena, Chandra. 1977. Women and kinship in Acheh Besar, Northern Sumatra. *Ethnology* 16(1):21–38.

Jenkins, David. 1980. The cause without a rebel. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 31:41–42.

Johanson, Vanessa. 1999. The sultan will be Dr. Hasan Tiro. *Inside Indonesia* 60:10.

Jones, Leon. 1997. *The security disturbances in Aceh during 1990*. Working Paper 104. Clayton, Australia: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University.

Kahin, Audrey R., and George McT. Kahin. 1995. *Subversion as foreign policy: The secret Eisenhower and Dulles debacle in Indonesia*. New York: New Press.

Kaldor, Mary. 1999. *New wars: Insecurity in a global era*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2001. "New" and "old" civil wars: A valid distinction? *World Politics* 54:99–118.

———. 2003. The ontology of "political violence": Action and identity in civil wars. *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3):475–494.

———. 2006. *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kapferer, Bruce. 1988. *Legends of people, myths of state: Violence, intolerance and political culture in Sri Lanka and Australia*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Kell, Tim. 1995. *The roots of Acehnese rebellion, 1989-1992*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project.

Kelly, John D., and Martha Kaplan. 2001. *Represented communities: Fiji and world decolonization*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Kepel, Giles. 1997. *Allah in the West: Islamic movements in America and Europe*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

King, Charles. 2004. The micropolitics of social violence. *World Politics* 56:431–455.

Kingsbury, Damien. 2005. Aceh's disaster could herald political change. *Jakarta Post*, January 24:6.

———. 2006. *Peace in Aceh: A personal account of the Helsinki peace process*. Jakarta: Equinox.

Klinken, Gerry van. 2001. The battle for history after Suharto: Beyond sacred dates, great men, and legal milestones. *Criticial Asian Studies* 33(3):323–350.

———. 2007. *Communal violence and democratization in Indonesia: Small town wars*. London and New York: Routledge.

Laffan, Michael Francis. 2003. *Islamic nationhood and colonial Indonesia: The umma below the winds*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Laitin, David D. 1995. National revivals and violence. *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 36:3–43.

Langhout, Joh. 1924. *The economic conquest of Acheen by the Dutch*. The Hague: Van Stockum.

Linge, Luth Ari. 1992. Perilaku "Regime Indonesia-Jawa" di Acheh-Sumatra. *Suara Acheh Merdeka*, June 21–24.

———. 1993. *Malapetaka di Bumi Sumatra*. Medan: PT Kemalasari Enterprice.

Lombard, Denys. 1986. *Kerajaan Aceh: Jaman Iskandar Muda (1607–1636)*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.

Mahmood, Cynthia Keppley. 1996. *Fighting for faith and nation: Dialogues with Sikh militants*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Martinez, Luis. 1998. *The Algerian civil war, 1990–1998*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mayall, James. 1999. Sovereignty, nationalism and self-determination. *Political Studies* 47:474–502.

McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of contention*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, John. 2006. *The fourth circle: A political ecology of Sumatra's rainforest frontier*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

———. 2007. The demonstration effect: Natural resources, ethno-nationalism, and Aceh. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 28(3):314–333.

McCoy, Alfred W, with Cathleen B. Read and Leonard P. Adams II. 1972. *The politics of heroin in Southeast Asia*. New York: Harper & Row.

McCulloch, Lesley. 2005a. Building solidarity. *Inside Indonesia* 81:12–13.

———. 2005b. Greed: The silent force of the conflict in Aceh. *Violence in between: Conflict and security in archipelagic Southeast Asia*, ed. D. Kingsbury, 203–227. Clayton, Australia: Monash Asian Institute.

McGibbon, Rodd. 2006. Local leadership and the Aceh conflict. *Verandah of violence: The background to the Aceh problem*, ed. Anthony Reid, 315–359. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

McKenna, Thomas M. 1998. *Muslim rulers and rebels: Everyday politics and armed separatism in the Southern Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mietzner, Marcus. 2007. Local elections in Papua and Aceh: Mitigating or fueling secessionism? *Indonesia* 84:1–39.

Miller, Michelle Ann. 2008. *Rebellion and reform in Indonesia: Jakarta's security and autonomy policies in Aceh*. London and New York: Routledge.

Morfit, Michael. 2007. The road to Helsinki: The Aceh agreement and Indonesia's democratic development. *International Negotiation* 12(1):111–143.

Morris, Eric Eugene. 1983. *Islam and politics in Aceh: A study of center-periphery relations in Indonesia*. Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University.

———. 1985. Aceh: Social revolution and the Islamic vision. *Regional dynamics of the Indonesian revolution: Unity from diversity*, ed. A. R. Kahin, 83–110. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Mote, O., and Rutherford, D., 2001. From Irian Jaya to Papua: The limits of primordialism in Indonesia's troubled east. *Indonesia* 72:115–140.

Mueller, John. 2000. The banality of "ethnic war." *International Security* 25(1):42–70.

Nairn, Tom. 1997. The curse of rurality: Limits of modernisation theory. *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited*, 90–112. London and New York: Verso.

Nayyar, D. *Emigration pressures and structural change: Case study of Indonesia*. International Migration Papers No. 20. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Nazar, Muhammad. 2000a. Aceh masa depan dalam perspektif SIRA. *Aceh di persimpangan jalan*, Syarifudin Tippe, 107–128. Jakarta: Pustaka Cidesindo.

———. 2000b. Integrasi dalam Islam dan politik wilayahisme. *Serambi Indonesia*, March 26.

Nessen, William. 2005. Why not independence? *Inside Indonesia* 81:4–7.

———. 2006. Sentiments made visible: The rise and reason of Aceh's national liberation movement. *Verandah of violence: The background to the Aceh problem*, ed. Anthony Reid, 177–198. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Palmer, Blair. 2007. The price of peace. *Inside Indonesia* 90. Available at http://www.insideindonesia.org

Pane, Neta S. 2001. *Sejarah dan kekuatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, solusi, harapan, dan impian*. Jakarta: Grasindo.

Patria, Nezar, Yuswardi A. Suud, and Nurlis E. Meuko. 2005. Berbagai jalan menuju Helsinki. *Tempo*, January 31–February 6:84–87.

Pazzanita, Anthony G. 1994. Morocco versus Polisario: A political interpretation. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 32(2):265–278.

Penders, C.L.M. 1977. *Indonesia: Selected documents on colonialism and nationalism 1830–1942*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Penerangan Daerah Militar Aceh / Iskandarmuda. 1960. *Kalau anda bertugas di Atjeh*. Kutaradja: Penerangan Daerah Militar Aceh/Iskandarmuda.

Pemerintah R. I. Daerah Atjeh. n.d. *Revolusi Desember '45 di Atjeh atau pembasmian pengchianat tanah air*. Djokjakarta: Pemerintah R. I. Daerah Atjeh.

Pettigrew, Joyce. 1995. *The Sikhs of the Punjab: Unheard voices of state and guerilla violence*. London: Zed Books.

Piscatori, James P. 1986. *Islam in a world of nation-states*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pisani, Elizabeth. 1990. Rebels without a cause losing ground in Indonesian bloodshed. *Reuters* November 25. Reproduced in *Indonesia News Service* 271, November 29, 1990.

Pokok-Pokok Pikiran dan Pernyataan Politik Musyawarah Wilayah: IV Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah Partai Persatuan Pembangunan Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Aceh, February 8, 1999. (Two-page typescript document.)

Reid, Anthony. 1969. *The contest for North Sumatra: Acheh, the Netherlands, and Britain, 1858–1898*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

———. 1979a. *The blood of the people: Revolution and the end of traditional rule in Northern Sumatra*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

———. 1979b. The nationalist quest for an Indonesian past. *Perceptions of the past in Southeast Asia*, edited by A. Reid and D. Marr, 281–298. ASAA Southeast Asia Publication Series. Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books.

———. 2004. War, peace, and the burden of history in Aceh. *Asian Ethnicity* 5(3):301–314.

———. 2005. *An Indonesian frontier: Acehnese and other histories of Sumatra*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

———. (ed.) 2006. *Verandah of violence: The background to the Aceh problem*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Robinson, Geoffrey. 1998. *Rawan* is as *Rawan* does: The origins of disorder in New Order Aceh. *Indonesia* 66:127–156.

Ross, Michael L. 2002. Resources and rebellion in Indonesia. Paper for Yale-World Bank project on the economics of political violence.

———. 2005. Resources and rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia. *Understanding civil war: Evidence and analysis*, Vol. 2: *Europe, Central Asia, and other regions*, ed. P. Collier and N. Sambanis, 35–58. Washington DC: World Bank.

Roy, Olivier. 1996. *The failure of political Islam*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Safrida and Soraya. 2005. *Catatan harian sandera GAM: Kisah nyata Safrida dan Soraya*. Jakarta: Pustaka Populer Obor.

Saleh, Hasan. 1956. *Revolusi Islam di Indonesia*. Darussalam: Pustaka Djihad.

———. 1992. *Mengapa Aceh bergolak?* Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti.

Schlegel, Stuart A. 1979. Technocrats in a Muslim society: Symbolic community in Aceh. *What is modern Indonesian culture?* ed. Gloria Davis, 232–248. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies.

Schulze, Kirsten E. 2003. The struggle for an independent Aceh: The ideology, capacity and strategy of GAM. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26(4):241–271.

———. 2004. *The Free Aceh Movement (GAM): Anatomy of a separatist organization*. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center.

———. 2005a. Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Freedom fighters or terrorists? RSC Working Paper No. 24. *Aceh under martial law: Conflict, violence and displacement*, ed. Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, 29–44. Oxford, UK: Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford.

———. 2005b. Not a romantic movement. *Inside Indonesia* 81:8–9.

———. 2006. Insurgency and counter-insurgency: Strategy and the Aceh conflict, October 1976–May 2004. *Verandah of violence: The background to the Aceh problem*, ed. A. Reid, 225–271. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

———. 2007. From the battlefield to the negotiating table: GAM and the Indonesian government 1999–2005. *Asian Security* 3(2):80–98.

Shiraishi, Takashi. 1990. *An age in motion: Popular radicalism in Java, 1912–1926*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Siapno, Jacqueline Aquino. 2002. *Gender, Islam, nationalism and the state in Aceh: The paradox of power, co-optation, and resistance*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Siegel, James T. 1969. *The rope of God*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

———. 1979. *Shadow and sound: The historical thought of a Sumatran people*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2000. *The rope of God* (rev. ed). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

———. 2005. The curse of the photograph: Atjeh, 1901. *Indonesia* 80:21–37.

Sikand, Yoginder. 2001. The changing course of the Kashmiri struggle: From national liberation to Islamist jihad? *The Muslim World* 91(1&2):229-256.

Sivan, Emmanuel. 1997. Arab nationalism in the age of the Islamic resurgence. *Rethinking nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, ed. J. Jankowski and I. Gershoni, 207–228. New York: Columbia University Press.

Sjamsuddin, Nazaruddin. 1985. *The republican revolt: A study of the Acehnese rebellion*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The ethnic origins of nations*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

———. 1991. *National identity*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.

———. 1998. *Nationalism and modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism*. London: Routledge.

———. 2001. *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Snouck Hurgronje, C. 1906. *The Acehnese*. 2 vols. Leyden: E. J. Brill.

Snyder, Jack. 2000. *From voting to violence: Democratization and nationalist conflict*. New York: Norton.

Soeyatno. 1977. Sejarah sosial masyarakat pedesaan Sibreh, Aceh Besar. *Segi-segi sosial budaya masyarakat Aceh: Hasil-hasil penelitian dengan metode "grounded research,"* ed. Alfian, 51–77. Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial.

Somadisastra, Machdar. 1977. Kepemimpinan dalam masyarakat pedesaan montasik, Aceh Besar. *Segi-segi sosial budaya masyarakat Aceh: Hasil-hasil penelitian dengan metode "grounded research,"* ed. Alfian, 78–100. Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial.

State of Acheh. 2005. Statement by Prime Minister Malik Mahmud on the signing of the Acheh Memorandum of Understanding, Helsinki, August 15.

Sukma, Rizal. 2004. *Security operations in Aceh: Goals, consequences and lessons.* Washington, DC: East-West Center.

Sulaiman, M. Isa. 1997. *Sejarah Aceh: Sebuah gugatan terhadap tradisi.* Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.

———. 2000. *Aceh Merdeka: Ideologi, kepemimpinan, dan gerakan.* Jakarta: Al-Kautsar.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. 1993. *The revenge of the past: Nationalism, revolution, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Suroso, Jusuf, and Jaumat Dulhajah. 2006. *Pengalaman Fery Santoro: Antara Hidup dan Mati, 325 hari bersama GAM.* Jakarta: Soegeng Saryadi Syndicate.

Suryodiningrat, Meidyatama, and Tiarma Siboro. 2005. The 'price' of peace talks for troubled Aceh. *Jakarta Post*, January 27:3.

Sweeney, John. 1998. Migrants poisoned then killed. *The Observer* April 26:1.

Talsya, T. A. 1990. *Batu karang ditengah lautan (Perjuangan kemerdekaan di Aceh 1945–1946).* Banda Aceh: Lembaga Sejarah Aceh.

Tambiah, Stanley. 1992. *Buddhism betrayed? Religion, politics, and violence in Sri Lanka.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thurgood, Graham. 1999. *From ancient Cham to modern dialects: Two thousand years of language contact and change.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Tippe, Syarifudin. 2001. *El-Hurr: Nurani untuk Aceh.* Yogyakarta: Yayasan Ulul Arham / Pustaka Pelajar.

Tiro, Wahab Umar. 1970. Pandangan orang luar: Kebesaran Atjeh dalam sedjarah. *Sinar Darussalam* 29:60–63.

T.M.O. 1929. Kalau tidak dengan Islam. *Soeara Atjeh*, November 15:5.

Van Evera, Stephen. 2001. Primordialism lives! *APSA-CP, Newsletter of the Organized Section in Comparative Politics of the American Political Science Association* 12(1):20–22.

Weber, Eugene Joseph. 1979. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France, 1870–1914.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wee, Vivienne. 2002. Ethno-nationalism in process: Ethnicity, avatism and indigenism in Riau, Indonesia. *The Pacific Review* 15(4):497–516.

Weinstein, Jeremy M. 2005. Resources and the information problem in rebel recruitment. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(4):598–624.

———. 2007. *Inside rebellion: The politics of insurgent violence.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wieringa, Edwin. 1998. The dream of the king and the holy war against the Dutch: The *kôteubah* of the Acehnese epic *Hikayat Prang Gômpeuni*. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61(2):298–308.

Wilhelmsen, Julie. 2005. Between a rock and a hard place: The Islamization of the Chechen separatist movement. *Europe-Asia Studies* 57(1):35–59.

Wilson, Ian Douglas. 2006. Continuity and change: The changing contours of organized violence in post-New Order Indonesia. *Critical Asian Studies* 38(2):265–297.

Wong, Diana, and Teuku Afrisal. 2002. Political violence and migration: Recent Acehnese migration to Malaysia. *Indonesia and displacement: A set of three papers.* Ford Foundation and Asia Pacific Migration Research Network, 55–71.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

World Bank. 2006. *GAM reintegration needs assessment: Enhancing peace through community-level programming.* Banda Aceh: World Bank.

Yunis, Tabrani. 2000. *Kelahiran dan perkembangan LSM di Aceh*. Paper presented to seminar on Wawasan Tentang LSM Indonesia, Jakarta, August.

Zamzami, Amran. 2001. *Tragedi anak bangsa: Pembantaian Teungku Bantaqiah dan santri-santrinya*. Jakarta: Bina Rena Pariwara.

Zartman, I William. 1985. *Ripe for resolution: Conflict and intervention in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2001. The timing of peace initiatives: Hurting stalemates and ripe moments. *Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 1(1):8–18.

PANCASILA

1. KETUHANAN YANG MAHA ESA
2. KEMANUSIAAN YANG ADIL DAN BERADAB
3. PERSATUAN INDONESIA
4. KERAKYATAN YANG DIPIMPIN OLEH HIKMAT KEBIJAK - SANAAN DALAM PERMUSYAWARATAN / PERWAKILAN
5. KEADILAN SOSIAL BAGI SELURUH RAKYAT INDONESIA

Index

Abbas, Ghazali Adnan, 144–45
Abd al-Samad of Palembang: *Fadail al-Jihad*, 26
Abduh, Umar, 199
Abdullah, Bakhtiar, 117, 225, 234, 242
Abdullah, Hasbi, 238
Abdullah, Ibrahim, 40, 41, 59
Abdullah, Razali, 73–74, 79, 80, 82
Abdullah, Tgk Syekh, 203
Abdullah, Yusuf, 88
Abdullah, Zaini, 61, 62, 91, 104, 105, 259n10; as GAM foreign minister, 225, 238; on Helsinki negotiations, 234
Abu Jihad. *See* Hasbi, Fauzi
Abubakar, Azwar, 259n3
Abubakar, Nashruddin, 140
Acciaioli, Greg, 36
Aceh Besar, 65, 158, 187, 190, 216, 231
Aceh Development Board, 53
Aceh Merdeka. *See* Gerakan Aceh Merdeka
Aceh Monitoring Mission, 236, 238
Acehnese identity: as category of practice, 19–21, 24; folklorization of, 35–36, 38, 39; vs. Indonesian identity, 3, 5, 8–9, 12–13, 16, 17, 20–21, 29–31, 33–34, 35–36, 40, 44–46, 47–48, 51, 70–74, 79, 80, 123–24, 145–46, 149–50, 162, 172, 176, 195, 208–9, 218–19, 242, 246–47, 251–52; as modern, 6–7, 18–21, 27, 46–48; origins of, 19–21; in pro-referendum mobilizations, 121, 123–24, 134–39, 149–50; relationship to grievances, 81–82, 83; role of ethnicity in, 4–5, 6, 7, 10, 14–15, 16, 18, 19, 44–45, 69, 70–74, 77–78, 95, 134, 135–36, 139, 169–70, 172–73, 228, 251–52, 258n7; role of history in, 3–4, 6, 8, 15–16, 19–21, 35, 36–37, 38, 39, 40, 46, 47, 53, 68–74, 83, 109, 134–35, 136–40, 143, 147, 154, 162, 250, 258n9, 260n4; role of Islam in, 10–13, 15–16, 17, 20, 24, 29–30, 30–31, 33–34, 37, 47–48, 68–69, 77–78, 193, 194–95, 208–9, 211–13, 214–18, 250, 252, 257n11; and specialness of Aceh, 21, 35, 36, 37, 38–39, 53, 56, 68, 81, 86, 124, 136, 145, 147–48. *See also* agency and Acehnese nationalism; historical myths
Acehnese language, 4, 21, 23, 24, 38, 146, 157, 257n5
Acehnese sultanate, 21–27, 147; cosmopolitanism during, 23, 103, 215; as golden age, 22, 28, 36, 40, 47, 68, 69, 76, 228, 250; slavery during, 22; social divisions in, 22–23, 47; sovereignty of, 3, 76, 139, 228, 248–49; Sultan Iskandar Muda, 22; and trade, 21, 103; *uleebalang* during, 22–23, 25, 26, 27. *See also* Dutch war in 19th century
Aceh Rayeuk. *See* Aceh Besar
Aceh Reintegration Agency, 255n
Achmad, Saiful, 259n4
Afghanistan: U.S. policies in, 194, 195–96, 197–98
Afrida, Nana, 93
Afrisal, Teuku, 115, 116
Agam, T. T., 29
agency and Acehnese nationalism, 7, 16, 49, 56; experience of exile, 9, 16, 39, 45–46, 48,

57–58, 77, 85, 103–8, 113–19, 120, 171, 202, 250; persuasion, 51
Ahmad, Sayed Mudhahar: *Aceh Bersimbah Darah*, 145–46
Ahtisaari, Maarti, 233, 262n5
Alas, 4–5
Al Chaidar, 145–46, 199
Alfian, Teuku Ibrahim, 26, 96, 257n3
Ali, Asnawi, 61, 62, 82
Ali, Sofyan, 181
Ali, T. Machsalmina, 132
Ali, Yusuf, 89–90, 113
All-Aceh Association of Ulama. *See* Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh
Amin, Tgk Husaini M, 236
Amran, Tgk, 179, 189–90
Andaya, Leonard Y., 24
Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities*, 103; on Indonesia, 122; on linear concept of time, 18; on long-distance nationalism, 77, 103; on nation and nationhood, 256n3; on print capitalism, 18
Anderson, Lisa, 105, 258n4
Annan, Kofi, 227
Arafah, Abu, 171–72, 176
Arjuna, 113, 156
Armstrong, John A., 18
Arun fields, 54
ASEAN, 236
Asuar, 259nn13,14
Asyikin, Cut Nur, 133, 137
Atjeh-moorden, 27, 172
Awe, Muhammad Usman Lampoh, 63–64, 91, 238
Azima, Fauzan, 142, 181, 182, 185, 186

Bahri, Syamsul, 165, 166
Bahri, Tengku, 91
Baktiya, 111
Baldwin, Roger, 42
Bali, 122
Banda Aceh, 65, 128, 137, 158, 231; Baiturrahman Mosque, 133, 196; HDC in, 226–27; Indonesian language in, 125–26; vs. Medan, 62; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 127, 131, 132–33, 143; State Islamic Institute, 197; and tsunami of 2004, 221. *See also* Aceh Besar/Aceh Rayeuk
bangsa, 47, 247; vs. *suku bangsa*, 38, 45, 69
Bantaqiah, Teungku, 99, 120, 129
Banyuwangi region, 157
Bardan, Tgk Haji Ibrahim, 256n2, 258n1
Bartkus, Viva Ona, 13–14
Basque nationalism, 90
Bataks, 62, 72
Batee, Tgk, 203
Batee Iliek, 90, 115, 163, 244
Bechtel, 66, 224
Beichman, Arnold, 42
Belawan, 33
Bertrand, Jacques, 8, 32, 34, 121–22
Beureueh, Daud, 31; and Darul Islam, 32, 33, 35, 51, 63, 64, 88, 198–99, 202; and PUSA, 28, 30, 39–40; relationship with Hasan di Tiro, 39, 40, 59, 60
Beutong, West Aceh, 94, 154
Beutong Ateuh massacre, 99, 129
Bin Jalil, Asnawi, 100
Bin Laden, Osama, 194
Bin Rusli, Umar, 100, 168
Birchok, Daniel Andrew, 259n7
Bireuen: elections in, 187–88, 238, 239; GAM in, 90, 91, 94, 115, 158, 163, 165–66, 168, 176, 178, 179–80, 181, 187–89, 207, 213–14, 231, 235–36, 244–45; GAM district of Batee Iliek, 90, 115, 163, 244–45; Jeunieb, 178; militias sponsored by army in, 169
Blang Pidie, 206
Boediono, 62, 65
Boland, B. J., 52
Bosnia, 152
Bourchier, David, 35
Bowen, John R., 37, 55
Brass, Paul B., 154
Brimob, 189
Brown, David, 130, 182
Brubaker, Rogers, 8, 256n3; on former Soviet minorities, 38; on national conflicts, 251; on nationalism and nations, 5–6, 19; on nationhood as contestable, 5–6, 19, 122
Buchanan, Allen, 75, 77
Budiman, Tengku Abdurrahman, 98–99
Buki Barisan mountain range, 65
Buloh Blang Ara, 109
Bulqaini, 133

Canada: Parti Québécois, 247
Castles, Lance, 33
Central Aceh: GAM in, 142, 158, 169, 173, 181, 185, 185–87, 231, 235, 240, 258n7; GAM district of Linge, 142, 185, 240; militias sponsored by army in, 169, 181
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. *See* Henry Dunant Centre
Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), 226, 227
Chauvel, Richard, 55–56
Chechnya, 193, 218
Chima, Jugdep S., 247
Christie, Clive J., 32

Cohen, Margot, 154
Coker, Christopher, 170
Cold War: and Hasan di Tiro, 9, 21, 41–43, 46, 200, 223–24, 257n9; end of, 14, 152–53
Collier, Paul, 152
Commission to Investigate Violence in Aceh, 255n
Communist Party of Indonesia, 51
construction industry, 44, 66, 148, 179–80, 244–45
constructivism. *See* identity construction
corruption, 141, 148, 182–90, 239
Crescent International of Canada, 201
Cribb, Robert, 143
criminals and GAM, 164, 165–66, 191, 192
Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), 262n5
Croatian nationalists, 70
Crouch, Harold, 221, 226
cuak (spies or informants), 155, 157, 174–76

Damsté, H.T., 26
Darul Islam, 19, 88, 145, 257n8, 260n4; and barter trade, 113–14; and Daud Beureueh, 32, 33, 35, 51, 63, 64, 88, 198–99, 202; and di Tiro, 41–43, 44, 58, 59–60, 77–78; vs. GAM, 9, 11, 12–13, 56, 59–60, 61–65, 71–72, 77–78, 79, 80, 88, 91, 97, 102, 174, 194–95, 198–99, 200, 201, 202, 208–9, 216, 217–18, 258n6; and Islam, 9, 12–13, 32–34, 47–48, 77–78, 96–97, 147, 194, 208–9, 212, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 249; and special territory (*daerah istimewa*) status, 8, 21, 34–35, 48, 56, 86, 208, 249–50; *ulama* during, 32–33, 47–48, 63, 64, 96–97, 195, 202, 204, 207, 259n3
Daud, Ishak, 92, 115, 117, 149, 163, 190, 230
Daud, Khartiwi, 187, 189, 260n3
Daud, Yusuf, 66
Davidson, Jamie S., 257n11
Davies, Matthew N., 260n1
Dawood, Dayan, 180
Dawood, Sofyan, 167, 173, 174, 198, 225, 245
Dayah (traditional Islamic boarding schools), 93, 98, 99, 131, 202–3, 205, 210, 214, 256n2
death toll, 2, 112, 154, 177, 230, 231–32, 255n
Demobilization, Demilitarization, and Reintegration (DDR) agenda, 243
democratization: and GAM, 222–23, 237–42, 246–47, 251; and GAM's abandonment of secessionist goal, 10, 222, 235, 236–42; of Indonesian government, 15, 17, 123–29, 239–40, 241–42, 251; and pro-referendum mobilizations, 16, 123–29, 134–35, 138, 142, 150, 242
demographics: infant mortality, 53; life expectancy, 53; rural vs. urban population, 53, 125
Dewi, Ahmad, 84, 98–99, 108
Dharsono, H. R., 87
Dijk, Cornelius van, 32
Dinamika, Yarmen, 145–46
di Tiro, Hasan, 39–46, 146, 257n8, 258n4; "The Aceh War 1873–1927," 40, 47; anti-Communism of, 41–43, 46; attitudes toward Acehnese history, 3, 40, 46, 57, 62, 68–77, 79–80, 83, 106, 109, 258n9; attitudes toward Acehnese sovereignty, 46, 57, 69, 74–78, 138–39, 226, 241; attitudes toward childhood, 95; attitudes toward death, 97; attitudes toward Indonesia, 3, 16, 40, 41–43, 44–45, 69, 70–74, 76–77, 176; attitudes toward international system, 16, 46, 48, 74–77, 223, 226, 250; attitudes toward Islam, 58, 98, 199, 200–201, 261n5; attitudes toward Javanese dominance, 3, 45, 49, 69, 70–74, 106, 209; attitudes toward propaganda, 78, 110; and Cold War, 9, 21, 41–43, 46, 200, 223–24, 257n9; and Darul Islam, 41–43, 44, 58, 59–60, 77–78; declaration of independence, 3, 50, 258nn5,9; *Democracy for Indonesia*, 44–45, 257n6; and Doral International Ltd., 44, 59; *The Drama of Acehnese History*, 71; experience of exile, 9, 39, 45–46, 48, 57–58, 77, 85, 103, 104; flag of GAM designed by, 104; and formation of GAM, 60–68, 133–34, 200; and guerrilla war, 65–68, 82, 170; importance of, 7, 16, 21, 56–57, 223, 250; on Indonesian identity, 18, 40; on Islam, 18, 44, 45; in Libya, 105–6, 107; name of, 256nn2,4; in New York City, 9, 40–43, 44, 46, 58, 74, 103, 250; personality, 41; public visit to Aceh in 1976, 58–59; and PUSA, 39–40, 58; relationship with Daud Beureueh, 39, 40, 59, 60; relationship with Maimud Haitar, 114; relationship with Kohlberg, 42, 43, 257n6; relationship with Lansdale, 43, 66–67, 200, 223–24; relationship with Morris, 257n9; relationship with Prawiranegara, 40; relations with family, 57, 58, 91; in South Vietnam, 43; stroke suffered by, 160, 225, 227; in Sweden, 104–5, 160, 200, 259n10; *Unfinished Diary/The Price of Freedom*, 56–58, 67, 71, 84, 91, 257n6; and United Nations, 41–42, 44, 46, 77
di Tiro, Tengku Cik, 25, 31, 39, 57, 256n2
di Tiro, Umar, 40, 91, 258n9
Djalil, Husni, 231, 240, 246
Djamil, M. Nasir, 133
Djeunib, Tgk Darwis, 115, 165–66, 182, 188–89, 244–45, 256nn2,4
Djuli, 169
Drake, Christine, 72
Drewes, G.W.J., 26

Drexler, Elizabeth F., 90, 101, 108, 155
Dulhajah, Jaumat, 260n5
Dulles, Allen, 43
Dutch colonialism, 27–30, 50
Dutch war in 19th century, 3, 19, 24–27, 46, 74, 76, 103, 147, 174, 248, 258n9, 260n4; and *hikayat prang sabi*, 25–26, 27, 28, 98, 139, 216; historical myth of Aceh's role in, 25, 36, 37, 68, 79; Tengku Cik di Tiro during, 39, 57; *ulama* during, 25–27, 39, 57, 207, 208

East Aceh: elections in, 148, 238; GAM in, 65, 89, 90, 111, 115, 148, 158, 163, 168, 170, 175, 216; Peureulak, 80, 89, 90, 163, 168, 175, 216; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 131
East Java, 157
East Kalimantan, 55
East Timor, 76, 104, 131, 201, 222; and Habibie, 122, 130, 162; UN referendum in, 122, 130, 225, 227–28
economic conditions in Aceh: agriculture, 53–54; GDP, 53–54; poverty rates, 53. *See also* liquefied natural gas (LNG)
education system, Indonesian, 1–2, 52, 107, 257n5
El Salvador, 191
Enlightenment, the, 62
Eritrea, 153
Esposito, John L., 105
European Union (EU), 227, 233, 235, 236
exile: Acehnese experience of, 9, 16, 39, 45–46, 48, 57–58, 77, 85, 103–8, 113–19, 120, 171, 202, 250
extortion. *See* predation
ExxonMobil, 151, 179

Fadhil, Rahmat, 196
Faisal, Tengku, 204, 207
Fajar, Kota, 260n6, 261n11
Farrell, James T., 42
Fatwa, A. M., 87
Fealy, Greg, 196, 204
Fearon, James, 65, 95, 174, 191
Feith, Herbert, 33
Foulcher, Keith, 36
Free Aceh Movement. *See* Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM)
Freeman, Michael: on remedial theory of secession, 137

Gadjah Mada, 45
Gaharu, Sjamaun, 34
GAM. *See* Gerakan Aceh Merdeka
Gani, Yusra Habib Abdul. *See* Linge, Luth Ari
ganja (marijuana), 84, 111
Gaouette, N., 122
Gates, Scott, 153
Gayo ethnic group, 4–5, 169, 181, 258n7
Gelanggang, A. H., 11, 32
Gellner, Ernest, 18, 62, 246, 248, 256n3
Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM): attitudes of Acehnese regarding, 1–2, 50; *Biro Penerangan GAM* (information bureau), 117; civilian infrastructure of, 159–60; vs. Darul Islam, 9, 11, 12–13, 56, 59–60, 61–65, 71–72, 77–78, 79, 80, 88, 91, 97, 102, 174, 194–95, 198–99, 200, 201, 202, 208–9, 216, 217–18, 258n6; declaration of independence, 1, 3, 50, 258nn5,9; defections from, 181, 192; and democratization, 222–23, 237–42, 246–47, 251; and Dutch-Indonesian comparison, 50; and elections of 2006, 237–40, 246–47, 262n7, 263n9; flag of, 104, 259n8; formation of, 2, 3, 60–68, 104, 133–34, 199, 200, 238, 258n5; fundraising by, 17, 117–18, 151, 153, 154, 161, 178–88, 190, 191, 223, 242–46, 250; guerrilla warfare of, 65–68, 170; and Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding, 2–3, 12, 15, 220–21, 231, 232, 233–37, 240–41, 243–44, 246, 252, 262n5; intellectuals and professionals in, 61–63, 83, 94, 95, 144, 167; Libyan trainees, 85, 90, 105–9, 110, 111, 116, 117, 120, 140, 166, 167, 168, 201, 224, 250, 259n9; military setbacks prior to tsunami of 2004, 222, 229–33, 234, 246, 250; military structure of, 90, 160–61, 163; *panglima muda*, 90, 160, 163, 165; *panglima sagoe*, 90, 160, 161, 163, 169, 214; *panglima wilayah*, 90, 160, 165, 171–72; period from 1976 to 1979, 2, 16, 56–83, 90, 104, 114, 162–63; period from 1989 to 1998, 2, 16, 84, 88, 90, 92, 94, 97, 108–20, 154, 155, 163, 164, 174, 204; period from 1998 to 2005, 2, 16–17, 49–50, 91, 99, 129, 148–49, 151–92, 197–99, 203–4, 206–7, 213–27, 220–52, 255n; propaganda of, 67–68, 71, 77–82, 109, 110, 111, 115, 117, 140, 151, 154, 162, 166, 213–14; and pro-referendum mobilizations, 17, 123, 124, 128, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137–42, 146, 226; recruitment by, 91–92, 152, 161–68, 192, 232; relations with Acehnese civil servants/politicians, 176, 177–78, 179, 184–88; role of concepts of honor in, 96, 101–2; role of folk Islamic traditions in, 85, 98–101, 102; role of Islam in, 10, 11, 16, 17, 68–69, 82, 85, 96–101, 102, 168, 193, 194–95, 197–209, 211–12, 213–17; role of kinship ties in, 10, 16, 78, 85, 90, 91–92, 95, 107, 120, 164–65, 166, 168, 173, 175, 191, 238, 260n4; role of local/friendship ties in, 16, 78, 85, 90–91, 94–95, 120, 164–65, 166, 168–69, 174, 191, 250, 260n6; role of mascu-

line ideals in, 10, 85, 90, 92–94, 101–2, 167; secessionist goals abandoned by, 2–3, 4, 10, 13–15, 17, 148, 150, 220–23, 229–47, 250–52; and Special Autonomy Law, 148–49; strategy of internationalization, 14, 17, 74–77, 120, 142, 170, 171, 173, 194–95, 198–99, 200–202, 222, 223–29, 232, 234, 235–36, 246, 250–51, 262n6; strategy of violence, 17, 95–96, 101–2, 110–11, 152, 153–57, 169–84, 191–92, 225, 250–51; vs. student activists, 123, 130, 134, 137–42, 197–98, 242; taxes (*pajak nanggroe*) collected by, 161, 178, 182, 186, 245; and tsunami of 2004, 14, 17, 221–22, 229, 232, 235, 246; weapons possessed by, 118, 161, 188–89, 259n11, 261n11
Geulanggang, Mustafa, 188
globalization, 120
Golkar, 36, 86, 87, 206
Greater Aceh. *See* Aceh Besar
greed, 181–82; vs. grievance, 152, 153–54
grievances among Acehnese: broken promises, 9, 31, 136–37, 139, 250; regarding Darul Islam revolt, 63; and GAM propaganda, 80–82, 137; regarding human rights abuses, 8–9, 84, 112–13, 123, 129, 134–36, 137, 138, 140, 142, 147, 150, 164–65, 173, 197, 214, 242, 250; as insufficient to explain revolt, 49–51, 55–56, 81–82, 83, 101–2; marginalization of Islam, 32, 33–34, 82, 86, 199; military actions, 8–9, 49, 50, 82, 84, 85–86, 112–13, 121, 123, 124–25, 129, 133, 134, 135, 136, 144, 145, 164–65, 250; natural resource exploitation, 8, 49, 54–56, 64, 80–81, 99, 127, 147; political centralization, 8, 49, 81–82, 87, 250; and pro-referendum mobilizations, 121, 123, 124, 127, 129, 133, 134, 135; relationship to Acehnese identity, 81–82, 83, 251–52

Habibie, B. J., 99, 126, 128, 163, 211; and East Timor, 122, 130, 162
Hadiz, Vedi R., 35
Haitar, Maimud, 114
Hamid, Ahmad Farhan, 259n3
Hamid, Ahmad Humam, 238, 259n3, 262n7
Hamid, Ayah, 259n3
Hamid, Ilyas. *See* Pase, Ilyas
Hamid, Muzzakir Abdul, 115
Hamid, Sayed Mudhahar, 145–46
Hamid, Syarwan, 128, 129
Hanafi, Usman, 78, 79, 200
Hanan, Abu, 89, 98
Harsono, Ganis, 41
Hasan, Husaini, 61, 62, 63, 65, 73, 79, 82, 95, 104, 199, 258n6
Hasan, Ibrahim, 36, 39, 53, 62, 65, 87, 109–10
Hasan, Usman, 211–12
Hasballah, Tgk Muslim, 203
Hasbi, Fauzi, 91, 156, 199, 261n2
Hasbi, Muchtar, 61, 82, 91
Hasjmy, Ali, 34, 37, 258n9
Hastings, Adrian, 11
Hatta, Mohammad, 103
Hays, Constance L., 257n9
HDC. *See* Henry Dunant Centre
Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding, 2–3, 12, 15, 220–21, 231, 232, 233–37, 240–41, 243–44, 246, 252, 262n5
Henley, David E. F., 27
Henry Dunant Centre (HDC), 226–27, 233, 262n5
Herriman, Nicholas, 157
hikayat prang sabi, 31, 36–37, 96–97, 109, 140, 213; and Dutch war, 25–26, 27, 28, 98, 139, 216
Hill, Hal, 53, 90
Hiorth, Finngeir, 67
historical myths, 19; Aceh as backbone of Indonesia's national liberation, 30–31, 37, 39, 53, 68, 136, 143, 250; the broken promise, 31, 136–37, 139, 250; golden age of Acehnese sultanate, 22, 28, 36, 40, 47, 68, 69, 76, 228, 250; heroic struggle for self-preservation/Dutch war, 25, 36, 37, 68, 79
Hizbut Tahrir (Party of God), 193
Hobsbawm, Eric J., 18
Ho Chi Minh, 103
Hoeffler, Anke, 152
Huber, Konrad, 226, 262n5
Hughes, James, 218
Hugo, Graeme, 114, 115
Humanitarian Pause of 2000, 226, 227, 228
human rights, 8–10, 137, 173, 222; abuses by military, 8–9, 16, 84, 92, 99, 112–13, 123, 124–25, 129, 135–36, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 150, 158, 164–65, 168, 176–77, 197, 206, 213, 214, 229–30, 242, 250; *investigasi kasus* (case investigation), 136, 140; National Human Rights Commission, 127; and NGOs, 124–25, 126, 127, 131, 136, 141, 177, 213; and pro-referendum mobilizations, 16, 123, 129, 134–36, 137, 138, 140, 142, 147, 150, 197, 242; and self-determination, 15, 138
Husein, Anwar, 263n11
Husin, Muhammad Daud. *See* Paneuk, Daud
Husni, Teuku, 146
Hutchinson, John, 18

Ibrahim, Ligadinsyah, 113
Ibrahim, Madjid, 53, 87
Ibrahim, Sofyan, 175
Ibrahim, Tgk, 231

Ibrahimy, M. Nur El, 31, 33, 40
identity as category of practice, 19–21, 24
identity construction, 6–10, 16, 39, 47, 68–70, 75
Idi Cut, 170
Idi Rayeuk, 170
Ilham, Sulaiman, 109, 110
ilmu, 99–101, 258n1
independence struggle against Dutch: role of Aceh in, 3, 4, 19, 20, 30–31, 36, 37, 47, 102, 128, 136, 137, 207; *ulama* during, 30, 31, 47; *uleebalang* during, 30, 33
India: Akali Dal party, 247; Khalistani movement, 247; Mughal Timuris in, 24; Sikhs in, 102, 247
Indonesian government: Badan Intelijen Negara (BIN), 156; as centralized, 8, 32–33, 49, 250; democratization of, 15, 17, 123–29, 239–40, 241–42, 251; fall of Soeharto, 2, 13, 14, 17, 65, 92, 119, 121–22, 124–26, 137, 154, 161–62, 163, 165, 166, 194, 196–97, 206, 211, 224, 236, 240, 241–42, 248, 251; New Order regime, 8, 14–15, 16, 35–36, 49, 51–52, 61–62, 68, 81, 83, 85–88, 124–26, 135, 136, 144, 145, 146, 147–48, 182–83, 206, 207, 209, 211, 219, 224, 249–50; and Pancasila ideology, 33, 35, 61, 99, 199, 209; and patrimonial economy, 17, 179–80, 182–84, 242–44; policies regarding Aceh, 1–2, 7–8, 18–19, 32–33, 34–39, 49–56, 68, 80–81, 83, 84, 85–88, 94, 99, 101, 102, 111–13, 116, 118, 119, 124, 128, 142–43, 144–45, 146–49, 163–64, 194, 195, 209–13, 214, 217, 220–21, 222, 233, 236–6, 237, 242, 249–50; policies regarding education, 1–2, 52, 257n5; policies regarding Islam, 11, 13, 17, 146, 147, 149, 194, 209–12, 252; policies regarding local parties, 145, 237, 241, 252; technocrats in, 36, 52–54, 55, 64, 81, 86, 87, 104, 127–28, 144, 145, 202, 249–50. *See also* Indonesian military; Indonesian identity
Indonesian identity: vs. Acehnese identity, 3, 5, 8–9, 12–13, 16, 17, 20–21, 29–31, 33–34, 35–36, 40, 44–46, 47–48, 51, 70–74, 79, 80, 123–24, 145–46, 149–50, 162, 172, 176, 195, 208–9, 218–19, 242, 246–47, 251–52; role of Islam in, 12–13, 16, 20, 29–31, 33–34, 47–48, 217–18; role of multiculturalism in, 2, 27, 36; role of national unity in, 35, 52, 142–43; slogan *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, 36; Youth Pledge of 1928, 27
Indonesian language, 125–26, 146, 157, 257n5
Indonesian military: ABRI Masuk Desa, 50–51; Daerah Operasi Militer (DOM/Military Operations Zone) period, 88, 92, 111–13, 124, 127, 129, 143, 154, 155, 163, 164, 174, 204, 255n; emergency in May 2003, 142, 143, 148, 151, 159, 161, 162, 166, 180, 187, 189, 203, 203–4, 207, 229–33; extortion by, 183–84; human rights abuses by, 8–9, 16, 84, 92, 99, 112–13, 123, 124–25, 129, 135–36, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 150, 158, 164–65, 168, 176–77, 197, 206, 213, 214, 229–30, 242, 250; informal agreements with GAM, 188–90; Islamization of, 212–13; Kopassus, 112, 189; Kostrad, 50; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 123, 129; suppression of GAM by, 1–2, 8–9, 14, 16, 17, 50–51, 82–83, 84, 92, 99, 110, 111–13, 116, 119–20, 129, 135–36, 140, 141–42, 143, 151, 155, 158, 159, 162, 163, 164–65, 168, 176–77, 179–80, 192, 206, 212–13, 222, 229–33, 234, 246, 250
Indrapuri, Teungku Hasballah, 28
instrumentalism: as analysis of nationalism, 10, 130, 140; as analysis of violence, 170–73
International Crisis Group (ICG), 173, 221, 243, 255n, 260n1, 262n7
International Forum for Aceh (IFA), 141
Iqbal, 259n14
Iranian revolution, 200, 261n5
Irian Jaya, 55
Irish Republican Army, 105
Ishak, Amir, 61, 62, 82
Ishak, Otto Syamsuddin, 99
Iskandar, T., 26, 257n3
Iskandar Muda, 22
Iskandar Muda Fertilizer factory, 178–79
Islam: alms (*zakat*), 210; Hadith, 214, 217; Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*), 12, 33, 195, 198–99, 212–13, 217, 218, 219; Islamic state, 31, 32, 33–34, 48, 194, 196, 199, 201, 217, 249; martyrdom, 96–98, 198, 205, 213, 218; modernism, 28–30, 32, 39, 47, 52, 128, 195, 202, 211, 259n3; Prophet Muhammad, 12, 26, 196, 201, 214; Qur'an, 26, 201, 214, 217; role in Acehnese identity, 10–13, 15–16, 17, 20, 24, 29–30, 30–31, 33–34, 37, 47–48, 68–69, 77–78, 193, 194–95, 208–9, 211–13, 214–18, 250, 252, 257n11; role in GAM, 10, 11, 16, 17, 68–69, 82, 85, 96–101, 102, 168, 193, 194–95, 197–209, 211–12, 213–17; role in Indonesian identity, 12–13, 16, 20, 29–31, 33–34, 47–48, 217–18; Salafism, 194; Shia Islam, 200; Sunni Islam, 200, 204; Syafi'i school, 204; traditionalism, 29, 32, 89, 98, 131, 132, 195, 202–8, 211. *See also* dayah; Acehnese sultanate; Darul Islam; *jihad*; *jilbab*; *madrasah*; *shari'a*; *ulama*; *umma*
Islamic State of Indonesia. *See* Negara Islam Indonesia
Islamic University of Indonesia, 40

Jacoeb, Isma'il, 28, 29

Jakarta stock exchange bombing, 171
Japan: occupation of Indonesia, 30, 39; policies regarding Aceh, 227
Javanese: Acehnese attitudes toward, 3, 29, 45, 49, 66, 69, 70–74, 80–82, 98, 106, 109, 134, 138, 139, 153, 169, 172, 172–73, 191, 199, 209, 258n10; di Tiro's attitudes toward, 3, 45, 49, 69, 70–74, 106, 209; GAM ethnic cleansing of, 66, 153, 172–73, 191; as GAM members, 261n8; Soeharto as, 72
Jayawardena, Chandra, 93
Jemaah Islamiyah, 194
Jenkins, David, 100
Jenner, William, 42
jihad (holy war), 25–26, 96–98, 102, 193–94, 198, 213, 218
jilbab (Islamic headscarf), 210, 213, 215
Johanson, Venessa, 138
Johor, 22
Jones, Leon, 99, 108, 126

Kafrawi, Tjut, 216, 246
Kahin, Audrey, 43
Kahin, George McT., 43
Kaldor, Mary, 152
Kalimantan, 32, 33, 122
Kalla, Jusuf, 220, 222, 249
Kalyvas, Stathis N., 153, 174, 191
Kamaruzzaman, Teuku, 100, 167
KAMMI. *See* Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia
Kandang, Daud, 113
Kapferer, Bruce, 96
Kaplan, Martha, 9
Karo, 30
Kartosuwirjo, 32, 33, 35
Kashmir, 13, 193, 218
Kayhan International of Iran, 201
kedai kopi, 93
Kell, Tim, 54, 77, 84, 86, 87, 94, 101, 145, 206
Kelly, John D., 9
Kepel, Giles, 200
Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (KAMMI), 196–97
Khalidy, Syekh H Muhammad Waly Al, 203–5
Khalidy, H. Muhammad Waly Al (Waled Tanoh Mirah), 203–5
kidnapping by GAM, 180–81, 260n5
King, Charles, 149, 153
Kingsbury, Damien, 221, 233, 263n10
Klinken, Gerry van, 77, 122, 258n2
KNPI. *See* Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia
Kohlberg, Alfred, 42, 43, 257n6
Komando Jihad, 199
Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia (KNPI), 131
Komite Peralihan Aceh (KPA), 204, 238, 244, 245
Kontras, 126
KPA. *See* Komite Peralihan Aceh
Kurdistan, 218
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), 218
Kuta Krueng, Tgk H. Usman, 206

Laffan, Michael, 257n4
Laitin, David, 65, 90, 93, 95, 174, 191
Laksar Moedjahidin, 31
Langat, Tgk Ahmad, 94
Langkat area, 30
Langout, Joh, 96
language. *See* Acehnese language; Indonesian language; Malay language
Lansdale, Edward, 43, 66–67, 200, 223–24
Laskar Jihad, 194, 198
Law for the Government of Aceh (LoGA), 221, 237
Leube, Ilham Ilyas, 100
Leube, Tengku Ilyas, 63, 66, 82, 185, 199
Lhok Nga cement factory, 54
Lhokseumawe, 23, 64, 91, 163, 167, 168, 178, 260n2
Lhok Tapaktuan, 175
Liberia, 107
Libya, 104; relations with United States, 106, 107; training of Acehnese exiles in, 85, 90, 105–9, 110, 111, 116, 117, 120, 140, 166, 167, 168, 201, 224, 250, 259n9
Linge district. *See* Central Aceh
Linge, Luth Ari, 117, 172, 174, 258n3; *Malapetaka di Bumi Sumatra*, 97
liquefied natural gas (LNG), 54, 64, 65, 90–90, 99, 151, 178, 179, 252
Lombard, Denys, 21, 22
Los Angeles Times, 24

Machiavelli, Nicolò, 73
madrasah (modern Islamic school), 28, 31, 39, 202
Mahmood, Cynthia Keppley, 102
Mahmud, Amir Rasyid, 91, 114, 257n8
Mahmud, Idris, 63, 82, 91
Mahmud, Malik, 91, 107, 118, 119, 171, 220, 247, 256n4; as GAM minister of state, 160, 187; as GAM prime minister, 160, 225, 237–38; on Helsinki negotiations, 232, 234, 240–41; relationship with Hasan di Tiro, 91, 114, 160, 225; on return of GAM activists from Malaysia, 163
Mahmud, Syamsuddin, 52, 53, 127–28, 146, 212
Mahmud, Zubir, 61, 62, 63, 73, 82, 91
Majapahit empire, 45, 199
Malacca Strait, 21, 113–14

Malay language, 21, 23, 24
Malaysia, 93, 109; Acehnese exiles in, 49–50, 85, 104, 105, 106, 113–19, 120, 140, 142, 163, 165–66, 168, 169, 202, 206, 260n3; Kuala Lumpur, 115; trade with Aceh, 33
Malhayati Port facility, 54
Malin, Patrick, 42
Maluku, 122, 194, 198
Manaf, Muzakkir, 107, 115, 160, 245, 263n11
Manggeng, Ayah, 206
Mansur, Abu, 60
Mansyur, Bustari, 133
Mao Tse-tung, 67
Martinez, Luis, 191
Marx, Karl, 10
Marzuki, 185, 186
masculinity, 10, 16, 85, 90, 92–94, 102, 167
Masyumi, 40, 41, 52
Matang, Tgk, 171, 190, 231
Mathaba Against Imperialism, Racism, Zionism and Fascism, 105–6
Maududi, Abul Ala, 200
Maulana, Arie, 140
Maulida, Tgk, 156
Mayall, James, 75
McAdam, Doug, 122
McCarthy, John, 54, 55, 102, 183
McCarthy, Joseph, 42
McCoy, Alfred W., 43
McCulloch, Lesley, 184, 190, 228
McGibbon, Rodd, 144, 148
McKenna, Thomas M., 100
Medan, 32, 37, 58–59, 65, 145, 172; vs. Banda Aceh, 62; gangsterism in, 155, 165–66, 245–46; Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU), 61, 62–63, 82, 199; *Waspada*, 58, 185
Medan-Banda Aceh highway, 78, 183, 184, 203
Menggamat area, 169–70, 260n7
merantau, 93, 115
Meuko, Nurlis E., 243
Meulaboh, 131–32
Meureuhom Daya, 171–72
middle classes, 94, 123, 144
Mietzner, Marcus, 232, 259n2
militias, army-sponsored, 169, 172, 176, 181, 229
Miller, Michelle Ann, 260n1
Minangkabau, 29, 72
Misriadi/Adijan, 181
Mobil Oil Indonesia, 54, 55, 66, 78, 224
modernist analysis of nationalism, 6–7, 18–21, 27, 46–48, 61, 94–95
modernity: industrialization in, 18; in Islam, *see* Islamic modernism; of nationalism, *see* modernist analysis of nationalism; and the state, 7–8
Moerdani, Benny, 209
Moertopo, Ali, 35
Morfit, Michael, 221, 222
Morris, Eric Eugene, 8, 30, 52, 79; on Aceh during independence struggle, 31; on civilian technocrats, 53, 81; on Darul Islam settlement, 34; on Islam during New Order, 86; on PUSA, 28–29
Morris, Robert J., 257n9
Mote, O., 122
Mueller, John, 152
Muhammadiyah, 28, 128
Muhammadiyah University, 117, 167
Muharram, 190, 231, 244–45
multiculturalism in Indonesia, 2, 3, 8, 27, 74
Muslim, Said, 185
Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt), 196
Muslim Institute, 200–201, 209
Mustafa, Sayed, 154, 163, 165, 187, 189, 240, 243
Mutasha', 259n14
mysterious violence, 154–57
mystical practices, 99–101, 102, 258n1

Nagan Raya, 189
Nairn, Tom, 94–95
nanggroe, 22–23, 26, 256n1
Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) bill. *See* Special Autonomy Law
Nashiruddin, Tgk, 236
Nasution, A.Y., 1–2
nationalism, 5–6, 122; contested nature of, 5, 8; as contingent, 149, 248–49, 263n1; debates on origins of, 6–10, 18, 49,122, 134, 248–49; definition of, 256n2; institutional context of, 7–9, 14–15, 249–50; interplay with international context, 9–10, 74–75, 77, 103–8, 120, 250; and Islam, 10–12, 193, 217–19; modernity of, 6–7, 18–21, 27, 46–48, 61, 94–95; as path-dependent, 249; premodernity of, 6, 7, 18; secessionist version of, 5, 8; social and cultural context of, 10, 16, 95–96, 120; and state breakup, 122, 142–43; and strategic calculations, 13–14; and violence, 94–95. *See also* Acehnese identity; agency and Acehnese nationalism; Indonesian identity
Nayyar, D., 114
Nazar, Muhammad, 134, 137, 138, 143, 217, 238
Negara Islam Indonesia (NII), 32, 33
Nessen, William, 6, 63, 102, 153, 173, 230, 233–34, 257n8
New York Times, 41, 43
Nietzsche, Friedrich: *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 58
NII. *See* Negara Islam Indonesia
nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 149; and corruption, 141; and environmentalism,

141; and GAM, 141, 224–25, 226–27, 233; HDC, 226–27, 233, 262n5; and human rights abuses, 124–25, 126, 127, 131, 136, 141, 177, 213
North Aceh: elections in, 148, 238, 263n9; GAM in, 64, 65, 80, 88, 89–90, 92, 106, 110, 111, 113, 140, 148, 158, 163, 167, 168, 170–71, 178, 179, 190, 231, 235, 238; Lhokseumawe, 23, 64, 91, 163, 167, 168, 178, 260n2; Pase district, 80, 88, 89–90, 92, 106, 110, 113, 163, 170–71, 190, 231; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 131, 260n2; Pusong area, 165; Simpang KKA massacre, 129
North Sumatra, 33, 62, 245–46. *See also* Medan
Nuruzzahri, Tengku, 133

oil industry, 52. *See also* ExxonMobil; Mobil Oil Indonesia; liquefied natural gas
Ottoman Empire, 24, 103, 104

Pakistan and Kashmir, 218
Palestine, 194
Palmer, Blair, 244
Paloh, Rahman, 92
Paloh, Surya, 3
Pane, Neta S., 178
Paneuk, Daud, 60, 63–64, 66, 106, 107
Panton, Abu. *See* Bardan, Tgk Haji Ibrahim
Papua, 122
Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), 128, 144, 211, 259nn3,4
Partai Keadilan (Justice Party), 196–97
Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), 52, 79, 86–87, 128, 144–45, 146, 206, 211, 238, 259n3, 262n7
Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), 116
Pase district. *See* North Aceh
Pase, Ilyas, 203, 235, 238, 256n2, 263n9
Pase, Yusuf, 151
path-dependency, 47, 102, 249, 250–51
Patria, Nezar, 243
Pazzanita, Anthony G., 218
Pekan Kebudayaan Aceh (week of Acehnese culture), 36
Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI), 257n8
Pemuda Pancasila, 167
Penders, C. L. M., 28, 257n3
Penerangan Daerah Militar Aceh/Iskandarmuda, 97
People's Consultative Assembly, 134
Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA), 28–29, 30, 32–33, 36, 202
Persia: Safavis in, 24
Petition of Fifty group, 87
Pettigrew, Joyce, 102
Peureulak, East Aceh, 80, 89, 90, 163, 168, 175, 216
Philippines, 13, 43, 193, 218, 227
Pidie, 256n2, 259n3; Blang Paseh, 39–40, 90; elections in, 148, 238; GAM in, 60, 64–65, 89, 90, 110, 140–41, 148, 158, 159, 163, 167, 238; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 131
Piscatori, James P., 12
Polisario, 218
PPP. *See* Partai Persatuan Pembangunan
Pramono, Maj. Gen. H. R., 111
Prawiranegara, Syafruddin, 30, 32, 40
predation, 152–53, 169–70, 223; predatory violence by GAM, 153, 178–84, 191, 245–46
preman (petty gangsters), 165–66, 182, 223, 245–46
Preparatory Meeting on Peace and Reconstruction in Aceh, 227
primordialist analysis, 6, 69, 101, 122
pro-referendum mobilizations: Acehnese national identity during, 121, 123–24, 134–39, 149–50; and democratization, 16, 123–29, 134–35, 138, 142, 150, 242; and GAM, 17, 123, 124, 128, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137–42, 146, 226; and grievances, 123, 125, 127, 129, 149; and human rights abuses, 16, 123, 129, 134–36, 137, 138, 140, 142, 147, 150, 197, 242; political elite during, 126, 127–29, 132, 134, 146, 147–48, 149, 211; student activists during, 123, 127, 129–34, 143, 149, 197, 214, 225, 260n2; *ulama* during, 131, 133, 207, 211
provocateurs, 155–57, 260n2
Pulo Gadeng, 245
PUSA. *See* Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh
Puteh, Abdullah, 1, 187, 188, 243

Qaddafi, Muammar al-: *Green Book*, 105, 106
Qutb, Sayyid, 194

Rachman, Risman A., 126, 141
Radio Republik Indonesia, 127
Raffles, Sir Stamford, 76
Rahman, Guree, 80, 88–91, 93, 94, 98, 110
Rais, Amien, 128, 134, 143, 146
Ramli, 239
Rasmanuddin, 197
Rasyid, Commander, 64, 89
rational actor theory, 153
Raya, Win Rimba. *See* Win Rimba Raya
Razali, Tengku, 177
referendum: justifications for, 120, 123–4, 129–30, 134–39, 142, 197, 242. *See also* pro-referendum mobilizations
Reid, Anthony, 6, 27, 28, 30, 47, 103, 248, 263n1; on Acehnese sultanate, 19, 21, 24, 25

Rendra, W. S., 124
Riau, 55, 122
Robert, 113
Robinson, Geoffrey, 77, 84–85, 93, 112
romanticism, 62
Ross, Michael L., 54
Rostina, Cut, 92
Roy, Olivier, 94
Russian nationalism, 143
Rutherford, D., 122
Rwanda, 152, 224

Safrida, 260n5
Saleh, Hasan, 11, 33, 35, 60
Saleh, Teungku Abdullah, 203
Samalanga, 98, 109
Saman, Muhammad. *See* di Tiro, Tengku Cik
Saman, Zakaria, 118, 238
Santoro, Fery, 260n5
Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union), 12, 30
Sastroamidjojo, Ali, 41–42, 75
Sawang, 109
Schlegel, Stuart A., 53
Schulze, Kirsten E., 159, 170, 221, 260n1; on autonomy in GAM, 160; on GAM coercion, 169; on GAM ethnic cleansing, 153; on GAM's internationalization strategy, 227
self-determination, 68, 74–76, 135, 137, 145–46, 223, 250; and colonialism, 75, 76; and human rights, 15, 138; and United Nations, 9, 46, 75
Senate Judicial Subcommittee on Internal Security, 42
Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh (SIRA), 130–31, 132, 134, 138, 139–40, 141, 143, 217, 237, 238–39, 246
Serambi Indonesia, 100, 126, 178
Serbian nationalism, 70, 143
Seulimuem, Abdul Wahab, 259n3
shari'a (Islamic law), 11, 17, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 52, 128, 146, 147, 149, 194, 196, 197, 199, 209–12, 213, 214–15, 217, 252
Shiraishi, Takashi, 30
Siapno, Jacqueline Aquino, 11, 93, 97, 101
Siboro, Tiarma, 263n11
Siddiqui, Kalim, 200
Siegel, James, 22–23, 25, 26, 29, 57, 92–93, 125, 135, 257n3
Sierra Leone, 153
Sikand, Yoginder, 218
Simpang KKA massacre, 129
Simpang Ulim, 170
Singapore, 76, 104, 109, 114, 202
SIRA. *See* Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh
Sjamsuddin, Nazaruddin, 32, 33, 35, 43, 114, 202
Sluys, Governor van, 96
Smith, Anthony D., 6, 10, 18, 61, 130, 134
Snouck Hurgronje, Christiaan, 256n2, 257n3; on Acehnese sultanate, 22, 23; on Dutch conquest, 25, 46; on *uleebalang*, 22, 25
Snyder, Jack, 144
Soeyatno, 88, 101
Sofyan, Ayah, 180, 197–98, 216
Somadisastra, Machdar, 88
Somalia, 224
Soraya, 260n5
South Aceh: elections in, 238; GAM in, 158, 163, 169–70, 179, 187, 189, 204, 260nn2,3,7; Menggamat area, 169–70, 260n7; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 131, 132; Tapaktuan, 131, 132, 163, 187
Southeast Aceh, 158, 235, 261n8
South Moluccas, 104
South Vietnam, 43
sovereignty: of Aceh, 3, 8, 46, 47, 57, 69, 74–77, 134, 137–39, 222, 223, 226, 228, 241–42, 248–49, 250, 256n3; relationship to nationhood, 256n3; and secessionist movements, 5
Soviet Union: breakup of, 38, 122, 142–43, 144, 249
Special Autonomy Law, 124, 128, 144, 146–49, 209–10, 229, 236–37, 259n4
special territory (*daerah istimewa*) status, 52; and Acehnese identity, 21, 37, 38–39, 68, 136; and Darul Islam, 8, 21, 34–35, 48, 56, 86, 208, 249–50
Sri Lanka: Buddhism in, 96; Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), 247; Sinhalese in, 70, 96; Tamils in, 70, 96, 247
Stavanger Declaration, 142
Straits Settlements, 113
student activists: attitudes toward independence among, 121, 130, 137, 138–39, 214; and fall of Soeharto, 125–26; vs. GAM, 123, 130, 134, 137–42, 197–98, 242; and Islam, 195–98, 212–13; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 121, 123, 127, 129–34, 143, 149, 197, 214, 225, 260n2
suicidal attacks, 27
Sukarno: and broken promise to Aceh, 31; and Dakota planes, 30, 37; fall of, 51, 137; and Indonesian identity, 27, 44–45; Masyumi banned by, 52; and Pancasila, 33
Sukma, Rizal, 260n1
Sulaiman, M. Isa., 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 38, 59, 204, 206
Sulawesi, 32, 33, 43, 72
Suny, Ronald Grigor, 122
Suroso, Jusuf, 260n5
Suryodiningrat, Meidyatama, 263n11
Suud, Yuswardi A., 243

Suwarya, Endang, 212
Sweden: Acehnese exiles in, 104–5, 160, 200, 227, 228, 229, 232, 234–35, 237–38, 259n10
Sweeney, John, 259n14
Syafi'ie, Abdullah, 1, 74, 97, 100, 138, 140, 160, 163, 202, 203, 225
Syahputra, Ismail, 227
Syiah Kuala University, 125, 180, 195–97; Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa (BEM), 196, 197; Student Solidarity for the People, 53

Tagore, 185
Taleb, Ismail, 88
Talsya, T. A., 31
Tambiah, Stanley, 96
Tami, 130, 140
Tamiang, 261n8
Tamlikha, 185
Tamy, Mustafa M., 185
Tanoh Mirah school, 203
Tanoh Mirah, Waled. *See* Khalidy, Tgk H. Muhammad Waly Al
Tapaktuan, 131, 132, 163, 187
Tarrow, Sidney, 122
Taufik, Gaos, 199
Tausi, Abu, 172, 193, 230
Taylor, Charles, 107
Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI). *See* Indonesian military
Thailand, 218, 227
Thalib, Ja'far Umar, 198
Thaliban, 131, 133
Thayeb, Syarif, 59
Thomas, Norman, 42
Thurgood, Graham, 21
Tiba, Sofyan Ibrahim, 148–49, 167
Tilly, Charles, 122
Tippe, Syarifudin, 212–13, 217
Tiro district in Pidie, 59, 64, 65, 110, 256n2
Tiro, Hasan di. *See* di Tiro, Hasan
Tiro, Tengku Cik. *See* di Tiro, Tengku Cik
Tiro, Tengku Umar di. *See* di Tiro, Tengku Umar
Tiro, Zainal Abidin, 40, 60, 63, 91
Tjot Girek factory, 54
TNI. *See* Indonesian military
tsunami of 2004, 14, 17, 221–22, 229, 232, 235, 246

ulama (Islamic scholars): during Acehnese sultanate, 23, 25–27; attitudes toward customary practices, 29, 204; during Darul Islam revolt, 32–33, 47–48, 63, 64, 96–97, 195, 202, 204, 207, 259n3; during Dutch war, 25–27, 39, 57, 207, 208; Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh (HUDA), 131, 133, 207; during independence struggle, 30, 31, 47; *Majelis Ulama* (Ulama Council), 51, 99, 207; modernists among, 28–30, 32, 47, 195, 202, 259n3; Nahdlatul Ulama, 132; during New Order, 51–52, 195, 204–6, 207–8, 217; and PPP, 86–87; during pro-referendum mobilizations, 131, 133, 207, 211; PUSA, 28–29, 30, 32–33, 36, 202; relations with GAM, 202, 203–8, 213; traditionalists among, 32, 131, 132, 195, 202–8, 211
uleebalang, 256n1; during Acehnese sultanate, 22–23, 25, 26, 27; during Dutch colonialism, 27, 88; during independence struggle, 30, 33
Umar, Keuchik, 64, 89, 92, 113
umma (Islamic community), 11, 48, 146, 195, 197, 212–13, 217, 219
United Kanak Liberation Front of New Caledonia, 105
United Nations: and Aceh, 224–25, 227–28; Charter, 75; and Hasan di Tiro, 41–42, 44, 46, 77; High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 104, 117, 118, 119; referendum in East Timor, 122, 130, 225, 227–28; secretary-general, 133, 227; and self-determination, 9, 46, 75
United States, 103, 194; House Un-American Activities Committee, 42; invasion of Iraq, 228; policies in Afghanistan, 194, 195–96, 197–98; policies regarding Aceh, 224, 227, 228; relations with Libya, 106, 107; September 11th attacks, 193, 195–96, 201–2, 228, 262n6
United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 225
Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU)/University of North Sumatra, 61, 62–63, 82, 199
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, 77
urban poor, 94, 95

violence: Commission to Investigate Violence in Aceh, 255n; expressive violence by GAM, 153, 170–73; GAM's strategy of, 17, 95–96, 101–2, 110–11, 152, 153–57, 169–84, 191–92, 225, 250–51; human rights abuses by Indonesian military, 8–9, 16, 84, 92, 99, 112–13, 123, 124–25, 129, 135–36, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 150, 158, 164–65, 168, 176–77, 197, 206, 213, 214, 229–30, 242, 250; instrumental violence by GAM, 153, 170–73; mysterious violence, 154–57; predatory violence by GAM, 153, 178–84, 191, 245–46; retributive violence by GAM, 153, 173–78, 192

Wahab, Zainal, 185

Wahid, Abdurrahman, 128, 132, 134, 211, 225, 226
Walad, Muzakkir, 53–54, 59
Waldheim, Kurt, 44
wali nanggroe, 146, 147, 259n4
Walker, Herman, 42
Weber, Eugene Joseph, 7
Wee, Vivienne, 122
Weidemann, Anna, 53, 90
Weinstein, Jeremy M., 153
West Aceh, 94, 154, 158, 163, 239; Beutong Ateuh massacre, 99, 129
Western Borneo, 257n11
West Java: Kartosuwirjo in, 32, 33
West Papua, 104
white robe movement, 99, 120
Wieringa, Edward, 26, 257n3
Wilhelmsen, Julie, 218
Wilson, Ian Douglas, 165
Win Rimba Raya, 185, 186, 261n10
Wiranto, General, 128
Wong, Diana, 115, 116
Wood, Elisabeth Jean, 163, 191
World Bank, 227

Yasin, Abd al-Salam, 11–12
Yogyakarta, Java, 30, 40
Yoh, Bernard, 43
Youth Pledge of 1928, 27
Yudhoyono, Susilo Bambang, 222
Yugoslavia: breakup of, 38, 122, 142–43, 144, 224
Yunis, Tabrani, 126
Yus, Muhammad, 133
Yusuf, Irwandi, 161, 167, 188, 221, 231, 238, 262n7; as governor of Aceh, 221, 240, 245, 247

Zamzami, Amran, 99
Zartman, I. William, 14, 222
Zinni, Anthony, 227
Zionism, 194, 197

Studies in Asian Security

A SERIES SPONSORED BY THE EAST-WEST CENTER

Muthiah Alagappa, Chief Editor
Distinguished Senior Fellow, East-West Center

Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia.
By Edward Aspinall.
2009

Political Conflict and Economic Interdependence Across the Taiwan Strait and Beyond.
By Scott L. Kastner.
2009

(Re)Negotiating East and Southeast Asia: Region, Regionalism, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
By Alice D. Ba.
2009

Normalizing Japan: Politics, Identity, and the Evolution of Security Practice.
By Andrew L. Oros.
2008

Reluctant Restraint: The Evolution of China's Nonproliferation Policies and Practices, 1980-2004.
By Evan S. Medeiros.
2007

Why Taiwan? Geostrategic Rationales for China's Territorial Integrity.
By Alan M. Wachman.
2007

Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security.
By Ann Kent.
2007

Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia.
By S. Paul Kapur.
2007

Minimum Deterrence and India's Nuclear Security.
By Rajesh M. Basrur.
2006

Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security.
By Avery Goldstein.
2005

Unifying China, Integrating with the World:
Securing Chinese Sovereignty in the Reform Era.
By Allen Carlson.
2005

Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency.
Edited by J. J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein, and Allen Carlson.
2004

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

This book has looked at a nationalist movement that "barked" very loudly but ultimately failed to achieve its goal of independence. Not surprisingly, assessments of Aceh's past have tended to follow closely the rhythms of politics in the territory. Before Acehnese nationalism emerged in the 1970s, scholars used to depict Aceh's history, especially the war against the Dutch, as part of a grand narrative of Indonesian national development.[1] In the post-Soeharto years, when Aceh's secession seemed a real possibility, historians and others looked back to the past for deep sources of Acehnese difference (see especially Reid 2004 and contributions in Reid 2006). Acehnese nationalists of course went much further and claimed that their movement was the reawakening of a slumbering consciousness and the restoration of a precolonial state. Now that peace has come to Aceh and separatist nationalism has lost its force (at least for now), we need to avoid carefully the temptation to be wise after the fact and dismiss Acehnese nationalism as having been weak or superficial. Some Indonesian government officials betray something of this sensibility in their enthusiastic embrace and welcoming of former rebels back into the national fold, and in their conviction that past injustices have now been rectified. Indonesia can, in the words of vice president Jusuf Kalla, simply "close this long page in history" (*Serambi Indonesia*, November 10, 2005).